UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
23rd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 28 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.23
4 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/47/340, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/391, A/47/499, A/47/564)

(a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (A/47/419 and Add.1-3)

(b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (continued) (A/47/340; E/1992/28)

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(d) UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (continued) (A/47/264-E/1992/71; E/1992/29)

(e) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (continued)

1. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) said that the report on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system (A/47/419) shed little light on the progress achieved in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211. The report emphasized vague common characteristics and did not contain any of the observations elicited from the questionnaires or field missions. Future reports might analyse the situations in different regions of the world and in different agencies, bearing in mind the key provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211.

2. The triennial review process should reaffirm the principles set out in resolution 44/211. Notwithstanding the obvious connection between the restructuring of the Secretariat and the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council, the Committee's discussion of the triennial review should respect the negotiations under way in the relevant forums and avoid issues not covered in resolution 44/211, such as functions of resident coordinators which were unrelated to technical cooperation or new funding mechanisms.

3. The Committee should focus on the specific modalities for implementing the guidelines on national execution and the programme approach, bearing in mind the agreements reached by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at its thirty-ninth session. However, it would be premature at the current stage to modify the new support cost arrangements. Moreover, undue rigidity should be avoided in operational activities: since situations in the developing countries varied widely, clear objectives and flexible means to achieve them were essential.

4. His delegation in principle welcomed the report's proposals for a unified country programme approach to technical cooperation, which would enhance the decision-making capacity of Governments. It also agreed that training was the key to the success of national execution, and that emphasis should be placed on cost-effective training at the regional and subregional levels. The programme approach would require a significant enhancement of the technical

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

expertise of United Nations experts sent to the field. There was also a need for substantially improved financial audit, management audit and impact assessment.

5. Lastly, he welcomed the high quality of the report on operational activities in the field of science and technology (A/47/419/Add.1) and expressed the hope that agreement could be reached on specific recommendations to optimize the resources of the United Nations system in that sphere.

6. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said that the difficulties which Member States and the organizations of the United Nations development system had encountered with respect to the resident coordinator system, the programme approach, national execution and decentralization could be attributed to different interpretations of those concepts and to the inadequate implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211. Nevertheless, the Committee should continue to reaffirm the validity of that resolution. He hoped that the discussion of the Secretary-General's report on operational activities (A/47/419) would result in practical solutions to those problems and welcomed the field perspective it presented and its valuable recommendations for the successful implementation of the resolution in question.

7. His delegation fully supported the proposal for a country strategy note and agreed that the programme approach concept must be further clarified. The efforts of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) (CCSQ(OPS)) to provide system-wide definitions, guidelines and principles were welcome in that regard. At the country level, the programme approach must be primarily a nationally managed effort.

8. His delegation supported the role of the resident coordinators, who should receive the necessary policy, technical and financial support, particularly from agency headquarters. Accordingly, serious consideration should be given to the proposal to make additional funding available to the resident coordinators to finance consultants and support staff.

9. One main purpose of decentralization should be to streamline the decision-making process, particularly with regard to programme and project formulation, approval and implementation. However, effective decentralization required a favourable environment.

10. United Nations efforts to enable the developing countries to enhance their capabilities in science and technology were of key importance, and his delegation welcomed the special attention devoted to that issue in document A/47/419/Add.1. He agreed that the discussion of science and technology policies in international forums must be rendered more effective. At the country level, the operational activities of the United Nations system should contribute to a specific national agenda and should strive for technological relevance rather than technological excellence.

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(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

11. His delegation welcomed the reform and restructuring methods adopted by UNDP to implement General Assembly resolution 44/211. The Programme's comparative advantage lay in its commitment to the principles of neutrality, universality and complementarity, and his delegation supported its coordinating role in operational activities, particularly in the field of human development. UNDP and the other members of the United Nations development system should carry out their operational activities bearing in mind such recent developments as the consensus reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the current efforts to revitalize the activities of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.

12. Mr. KING (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that those delegations wished to associate themselves with the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77.

13. Although such factors as the adoption of Agenda 21 and the ongoing restructuring and revitalization of the activities of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors must be taken into account, the legislative framework for the discussion of the triennial policy review of operational activities must remain General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 46/219. The development challenge facing the countries of the South required a comprehensive and integrated approach to their development needs. In addition, environment and development strategies must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development on a global scale, an objective that was fundamental for the survival of mankind. Full implementation of Agenda 21 by both the North and the South would place a heavier financial burden on developing countries, underscoring the urgency of reaching the internationally agreed targets for official development assistance (ODA).

14. The CARICOM countries attached great importance to multilateral support for development and used the United Nations system in areas in which multilateralism had a comparative advantage. In the light of their past experience, they were convinced that the fundamental principles elaborated in the consensus of 1970 remained valid. However, efforts must be made to improve the predictability of resources so that the United Nations system could respond to the South's increasing development needs more effectively.

15. The States members of CARICOM regretted that document A/46/219 had not been available earlier to facilitate preparation for the triennial policy review, although they understood the difficulties which had caused the delay.

16. The new focus on human development in the United Nations system would have a positive impact on future programmes and bring tangible benefits to developing countries. He therefore looked forward to further discussion of the linkage of human development with the proposed world summit for social development.

(Mr. King, Trinidad and Tobago)

17. Further encouragement must be given to the elaboration of a system-wide consensus on a programme approach and the harmonization of the programme cycles of all funding agencies with the planning periods of national Governments, where feasible. The simplification of rules and procedures relating to accounting and project formulation, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation would also remove a significant obstacle to the utilization of national capacities.

18. In the context of national execution, although it had been recognized that the United Nations system would have to be given a sharper technical focus, it had not been anticipated that that reorientation would lead to an erosion of the technical capacity of the specialized agencies. The technical support of those agencies must continue to figure prominently in operational activities through a tripartite relationship with Governments and funding bodies. The CARICOM countries also agreed with the views on flexibility and national execution expressed in paragraph 154 of document A/47/419.

19. The States members of CARICOM had taken note of the proposals to improve the resident coordinator system (A/47/419, para. 140). An alternative might be to conduct a comprehensive review of the system, taking into account the role of the lead agency in individual country programmes. The members of the United Nations system should strive for further progress in the establishment of common premises where feasible, without any additional costs to developing countries. A country-by-country review would be desirable. Procurement from developing countries must also be substantially increased. The utilization of national capacities should contribute to that process.

20. Access to science and technology was one of the most important factors in bridging the development gap between the North and the South. He supported the elaboration of a policy on the ownership of intellectual property developed in projects financed by the United Nations with the cooperation of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

21. Mr. SIEBER (Observer for Switzerland) said that despite the difficulties generated by rapidly changing political and economic circumstances, and the stagnation of resources available for development assistance, notable improvements had been made by many members of the United Nations development system in enhancing the effectiveness of their operational activities. However, progress had been much slower from the inter-agency perspective. The system must therefore concentrate its operational activities on areas where it possessed clear comparative advantages and further improve the coherence of its programmes, with greater emphasis on the promotion of socially equitable and sustainable development, policy advice and capacity-building.

22. His delegation appreciated the frankness of a number of the assessments contained in document A/47/419. It fully agreed on the need for an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to development cooperation and welcomed

(Mr. Sieber, Observer, Switzerland)

the emphasis on human development. General Assembly resolution 44/211 remained a valid guideline for further improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the system's operational activities. However, the absence of any substantive reference in the report to Agenda 21 and the potential role of the operational activities of the United Nations in its implementation was unfortunate.

23. His delegation was pleased to note that the need for common country strategies was no longer seriously disputed and that CCSQ (OPS) had recently agreed on basic principles for their elaboration. The concept should now be implemented in countries which were ready to collaborate in such an undertaking, the most likely candidates being those for which the United Nations system had developed a country profile or in which National Technical Cooperation Assessments and Programmes (NATCAPs) or other comprehensive needs assessments had taken place. The application of the country strategies should be closely monitored and evaluated.

24. The Secretary-General also should report regularly on progress made in the implementation of the programme approach. There was a real need for programme auditing in addition to financial auditing, in order to focus on programme outputs and their sustainability. Suitable programme indicators would have to be developed for that purpose. Although encouraging progress had been made in strengthening the resident coordinator system and establishing United Nations country teams, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) must find a workable solution to the remaining difficulties without delay.

25. His delegation strongly favoured the development of a comprehensive and coordinated United Nations training strategy for operational activities. The pilot seminars on management of field collaboration organized by the International Labour Organisation's International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training at Turin had proved valuable, and should be expanded and complemented by other system-wide courses.

26. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that the reforms of operational activities of the United Nations system should be based on consensus and the practical needs of all countries. Particularly important was the new procedure for interaction and coordination between headquarters and the field. In that regard, the establishment of common premises - provided the necessary conditions were met - seemed useful. In order to improve coordination, greater use should be made of the NATCAP exercise and round-table meetings. The promotion and improvement of an "integrated response" was not an end in itself but a means of enhancing the effectiveness of work in the field; in that area as well, the interests and specific nature of the activities of all interested organizations must be taken fully into account. The proposal made by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on United Nations strategy at the country level, as well as the idea of establishing an international development council were of practical interest.

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27. The decisions of the UNDP Governing Council and the Executive Board of UNICEF on the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Central and Eastern Europe provided a good basis for consideration of the problems of the countries in transition and the kinds of assistance that could be provided by the operational activities of the United Nations system, on the understanding that the interests of the developing countries should not be jeopardized. While his delegation recognized that UNDP, UNICEF and other agencies should continue to focus their activities on the needs of the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, the time had come to adopt a truly universal approach and make greater use of opportunities for multilateral technical cooperation to support countries making the transition to a market economy.

28. The proposals on the harmonization of multilateral technical assistance with national development programmes, the wider application of the national execution modality, greater use of the programme approach rather than a project approach, and the synchronization of the programming cycles of all the funding agencies of the United Nations system with national social and economic development programmes were interesting and balanced.

29. The operational activities of the United Nations system required adequate, guaranteed and stable financing. Participation in operational activities and multilateral technical cooperation should be voluntary, which presupposed the voluntary nature of contributions for the implementation of such activities. Joint financing with the equal participation of donors and recipients, including the establishment of additional voluntary and special funds on the basis of special-purpose contributions, might also be considered, together with the possibility of obtaining resources from interested non-governmental organizations and private businesses.

30. Efforts to introduce a human and environmental dimension into multilateral technical cooperation were also welcome. The relevant indicators should be taken into account in the preparation of multilateral development programmes.

31. The Russian Federation attached great importance to expanding its cooperation with UNDP, particularly in the field of technical and advisory support for its market reforms. A new stage in the Russian Federation's cooperation with UNDP had begun in September 1992, during negotiations with the Programme Administrator in Moscow. Practical measures were being taken to increase the participation of interested Russian organizations, including non-governmental organizations, in the implementation of UNDP-sponsored programmes and projects. The recently established Russian Agency for International Cooperation and Development should be an important stimulus for broadening cooperation between Russia and UNDP.

32. Russia greatly appreciated the activities undertaken by UNICEF to implement the decisions of the World Summit for Children. In January 1992, President Boris Yeltsin had signed the World Declaration on the Survival,

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, Russian Federation)

Protection and Development of Children. A landmark event in the Russian Federation's efforts to protect children and mothers had been the adoption, in June 1992, of a presidential decree on immediate measures to implement the Declaration, as well as the federal programmes "Children of Russia" and "Children of Chernobyl". His delegation welcomed the significant contribution of UNICEF to the implementation of multilateral emergency operations and its humanitarian aid to children in especially difficult circumstances. In recognition of the valuable activities of UNICEF in the Russian Federation, the Fund's Executive Director had been awarded the Tolstoy Medal.

33. Mr. MBENNA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77.

34. On the issue of coordination and management of operational activities, his delegation welcomed the efforts under way to give recipient Governments a leading role in the national execution of country programmes and projects. However, those Governments must be involved in the formulation of such programmes if they were to implement them effectively. The role of the United Nations system was to provide recipient Governments with whatever support and resources they requested or needed so that they would be better able to play the coordinating role expected of them.

35. In executing national programmes, top priority should be given to making optimum use of indigenous institutions, experience and expertise along with the experience and expertise of the United Nations system. That would permit a linkage to be established between the training of local experts and their deployment and would build and consolidate national capacities.

36. The scope of proposals on the transfer of science and technology for development needed to be enlarged. Indigenous technologies could not be ignored or left unutilized. The United Nations system might initiate collaborative arrangements which would ensure that locally developed technologies were incorporated in national programmes and attracted the necessary demand at the national as well as the regional and subregional levels, particularly in the developing countries.

37. Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that the sweeping political changes of the past several years had opened up new vistas of cooperation but had also, paradoxically, caused the countries with economies in transition to become recipient countries. While the legitimate needs of those countries should not be met at the expense of developing countries, the principle of universality should continue to guide multilateral development cooperation.

38. Austria agreed that the United Nations system needed to be reformed and revitalized in the economic, social and related fields in order to meet the challenges of the 1990s and beyond and shared the view that the current triennial policy review could and should make a serious contribution to

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improving the effectiveness of the United Nations operational activities. In carrying out the review, the Committee should be guided by the important agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

39. General Assembly resolution 44/211 still constituted the basic framework for further enhancing of the functioning of the United Nations system's operational activities. The triennial review should therefore concentrate on elaborating clear guidelines for the implementation of the principles set out in that resolution and on remedial action to overcome current shortcomings. Attention should be focused primarily on the situation in the field. Austria felt strongly about a unified United Nations presence and the establishment of common premises; it welcomed the establishment of common premises in some 20 countries and urged the organizations comprising the Joint Consultative Group on Policy to increase that number.

40. The role of the resident coordinator should be strengthened, and clear assignments of responsibility and lines of reporting should be established. She welcomed the agreement reached in ACC on principles for a United Nations common country strategy. Such agreement should enable the bodies of the United Nations system to work together in developing an integrated United Nations response to national strategies and to divide up the tasks rationally, on the basis of organizations' comparative advantages.

41. National execution should be favoured wherever feasible and the Secretary-General's call for a major effort in the area of capacity-building should be heeded; in that regard, UNDP had a particular role to play.

42. Austria deplored the lack of clarity which characterized the support cost successor arrangements: it created a climate of insecurity and undermined confidence in United Nations operational activities. However, her delegation welcomed all efforts aimed at coordinating operational activities more effectively. In the Economic and Social Council, it had expressed support for the Nordic proposal to improve governance by allocating an international development council function to the Council.

43. Another area of importance to her delegation was relief, reconstruction and development, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 46/182. The interrelationship of relief efforts and development assistance was a crucial one. Finally, her delegation attached particular importance to the concept of human development, which must be the focus of the Organization's endeavours if development cooperation was to fulfil its goal of service to mankind.

44. Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) said that the triennial policy review must result in appropriate policy guidance for the United Nations system so that operational activities could support the development efforts of the developing countries more effectively. It could be concluded from the

(Mr. Bahadian, Brazil)

Secretary-General's report (A/47/419), that uneven progress had been achieved in the three years since General Assembly resolution 44/211 had been adopted, although the process seemed essentially to be moving in the right direction.

45. Further guidance was required in the closely interrelated areas of programming and strengthening of the resident coordinator system. The country strategy note called for in resolution 44/211 provided a broad framework in which the needs and priorities of the recipient country were outlined and under which the individual responses of the system's agencies, funds and programmes would be coordinated. The country strategy note must help to enhance individual programmes and not restrict the valuable assistance and technical cooperation provided by organizations under their own specific mandates. Such restrictions would irreparably damage the capacity of the different parts of the system to assist recipient countries with expertise and innovative initiatives in their spheres of activity. In the context of the country strategy note, the resident coordinator must be viewed as a team leader having a global perspective from which to give the necessary impetus to individual team members in the achievement of the country's objectives.

46. Proposals to expand such a role unduly in order to give a single United Nations country representative global responsibility for all operational activities within the country were alarming. The Group of 77 had already stated that such expanded functions would create insurmountable legal and political difficulties. Even if the resident coordinator's role was expanded only to that of representative for all operational activities, difficulties similar to those arising in the case of individual country programmes would result, particularly as the resident coordinator's workload was already high. In any case, the guidelines recently approved by ACC on the subject seemed to strike an appropriate balance between the need for increased coordination and the risks of excessive centralization.

47. The calls for a centralized international development council at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council's most recent session would run counter to both the spirit and the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which called for greater decentralization. The paradox of having a consensus on the need for decentralization together with proposals that reinforced centralizing tendencies pervaded the discussion of operational activities; his delegation believed that the agreed goal of decentralization must prevail.

48. With respect to resources for operational activities, the Nordic proposal to reform the structure of contributions to the programmes and funds involved in operational activities and to provide financing for operational activities on a stable and assured basis deserved the Committee's consideration, although his delegation doubted the effectiveness of the specific measures proposed to achieve those goals. For example, the implementation of assessed contributions to finance operational activities gave the impression that developing countries did not contribute in any way whatsoever to such

activities. They did contribute, inter alia, through expenses covered by the regular budget and the internal mobilization of human, material and financial resources for project execution. Furthermore, assessed contributions would tend to erode the principle of the voluntary and grant nature of resources for operational activities. Such proposals tended to mask the real difficulty in the financing of operational activities, which was the lack of political will. A simpler and more equitable solution would lie in a renewed commitment by countries that had not yet done so to attain the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA.

49. The assistance provided by the United Nations system for human development should not be limited to palliative or emergency assistance, but must continue to focus on promoting development and the transfer of skills. Given the increasingly vital role of science and technology in development efforts, the United Nations system should address the issue in a manner befitting its importance. In that connection, his delegation envisaged a leading role for the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in providing a system-wide focus and impetus in that crucial field.

50. Mr. RYSINSKI (Poland) said that the Committee had an exceptional opportunity to influence the course of reform of the United Nations development system and thereby strengthen international economic cooperation. First of all, a convenient confluence of opportunities and necessities had appeared which in turn had been underpinned by imaginative ideas for enhancing the delivery of the United Nations technical assistance. Secondly, current efforts to restructure the economic and social sectors of the United Nations and the institutional follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development showed promise for the rejuvenation and remodelling of the United Nations system. Thirdly, the universal nature of operational activities was being overwhelmingly acknowledged. As a country with an economy in transition, Poland recognized the significance of that fact and its practical implications, and would consider recommending the espousal of such concepts as economic and technical cooperation among countries in transition.

51. What was most important, however, was for the needs and concerns of countries in transition to be taken into account in the resolution to be adopted on the triennial policy review. He was therefore pleased to note that his delegation had reached an understanding on the issue with the coordinators of the Group of 77 during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

52. The debate so far had stressed the need for operational activities to be geared to field activities, for a unified United Nations presence and approach at the country level, and for headquarters to serve the delivery of services in the field at the national and regional levels. Such decentralization would entail a considerable transfer of activities and responsibilities from headquarters to the field and necessitate a strengthening of the resident coordinator's role. At the same time, consolidation of the different country

(Mr. Rysinski, Poland)

programmes and field structures should not preclude a diversity of responses and approaches by development agencies to the technical support problems of different countries. Unity within diversity should best serve the purposes of a renewed United Nations field presence.

53. A parallel process of consolidation and strengthened coordination should be pursued at the intergovernmental level. The Economic and Social Council might serve as the focal point for central policy guidance in that respect.

54. Another area of concern was the financing of operational activities, especially at a time of slower growth or recession in many parts of the world economy. Poland had consistently put on record its support for a voluntary scheme of pledges. Aware of the limitations of that practice, it would consider supplementing such funds by encouraging a steady flow of contributions from the business community and from non-governmental organizations. Poland also believed that cost-sharing and contributions in kind should not be disregarded as substantial forms of contribution; in that connection, the Nordic proposal to combine voluntary contributions with assessed and negotiated pledges deserved further consideration.

55. His delegation hoped that a suitable solution would be found to the problem of ensuring more direct participation by the countries in transition in the operations of the United Nations development system. The tasks facing the Committee in the operational sector could only be addressed through a partnership involving longstanding commitments for sustainable cooperation. In a rapidly changing world, the development system was in a position to offer change based on continuity.

56. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

57. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) said that much of the work of UNIFEM focused on ways of linking women at the grass-roots level with the macro-policy-making that shaped their future. UNIFEM endeavoured to give direct support to small, but creative, women's initiatives with potential for demonstrating effective developmental alternatives, and to promote innovative programmes that could lead to a policy environment that encouraged women's participation at all levels. The Fund sought to help policy-makers gain a better understanding of how their decisions affected the lives of grass-roots women, and to assist grass-roots women in acquiring the skills, experience and confidence they needed to negotiate a better deal for themselves.

58. At the global level, there was a constituency of concerned women that could be mobilized to support the values of peace, equality and justice. Often, the concerns of that constituency were not adequately reflected in United Nations decisions and operations. The General Assembly resolution convening the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had made no reference to women whatsoever, and women all over the world had

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

rallied to influence the course of events. Often with the help of concerned men, women had lobbied to take part in the preparatory process for the Conference and to include women's concerns in its agenda. The result was that women's concerns were integrated into Agenda 21. The Agenda 21 recommendations for education and training in most sectoral areas would, if carried out, increase women's opportunities.

59. During the current session, the General Assembly would take decisions on the establishment of new institutions to monitor the implementation of the commitments made by Governments at the Rio Conference. In order for Agenda 21 to have a real impact on people's lives, there was a need for broader participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the United Nations, new financial resources, the redeployment of current resources, and accountability on the issue of gender balance. Women must have the same opportunities as men to serve on the Commission for Sustainable Development and the proposed high-level advisory body, and to hold senior positions in the Commission's permanent secretariat.

60. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that his delegation strongly supported the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system (A/47/419), the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNICEF on improving coordination of multilateral technical assistance with the national development programmes of recipient countries. The adequate and stable financing of operational activities of the United Nations system was essential. While participation in the financing of operational activities should remain voluntary, that did not rule out the possibility of considering proposals on the joint financing of specific projects by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and donor and recipient countries.

61. It might be useful to establish additional funds on the basis of special-purpose contributions from various sources. Before such funds were established, it would be necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of the social and economic situation in the recipient country concerned, and to assess the comparative advantages of the various international agencies, regional organizations and bilateral donors in order to ensure optimum complementarity and an effective division of labour among all organizations and countries providing assistance.

62. An obvious advantage of the operational activities of the United Nations system was their relatively reliable network of field offices headed by UNDP resident coordinators. The bodies, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system should make concerted efforts to strengthen that network so that the Organization's collective experience and resources were used in the best way possible and had an economic and social impact on countries receiving technical assistance. That network and the entire system of social and economic activities should be equipped with a mechanism for detecting crises as they arose, and ensuring that timely measures were taken to prevent them from worsening.

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

63. Belarus had welcomed the UNDP Governing Council's decision to grant it recipient-country status within UNDP. His delegation agreed with the European Community and its member States that the integrated response of the United Nations system to national development strategies, based on a rational division of labour within and among financing bodies and specialized agencies, should be implemented without delay in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. A new stage in cooperation between the countries of that region and the United Nations system of technical assistance had begun. Such cooperation called for completely new and innovative methods.

64. Belarus had signed and ratified the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children. In implementing the provisions concerning children in especially difficult circumstances, in particular those who had been subjected to atomic radiation, the Parliament of Belarus had approved a national programme, entitled "Children of Chernobyl". International and charitable organizations, cities and communes, business circles and individual citizens were providing valuable assistance to Belarus in carrying out its national programme. Belarus also appreciated the assistance provided by UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), which had resulted in a report on the situation of women and children in the country. Such efforts should be coordinated with the efforts of the international community to implement the decisions of the World Summit for Children at the global and national levels. The UNICEF secretariat should assist Belarus in preparing a comprehensive national plan of action to assist women and children affected by the Chernobyl disaster.

65. Mr. FORBES-WATT (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that the responsibilities of FAO were particularly acute in a world where over 60 per cent of the population of the developing countries pursued rural occupations and where malnutrition and hunger were widespread. FAO had paid close attention to the main elements of the triennial policy review of operational activities and follow-up to General Assembly resolution 44/211 and had acted on those recommendations, as well as on its own similar 1989 review recommendations. FAO had played an active role in developing the programme approach, common strategies and guidelines for better field coordination in conjunction with CCSQ (OPS).

66. The follow-up to resolution 44/211 was less disappointing than the documentation might suggest, but it had taken place at a time of greatly restricted resources for agencies such as FAO, which meant that the margin for change was very narrow. Decentralization was one area that had been affected. While FAO endorsed that goal, its efforts to decentralize its field operations had been hampered by the agency's financial situation.

67. It was important that the UNDP support cost success or arrangements, which were a major policy thrust of resolution 44/211, should be effectively implemented. Yet, contrary to the original intentions, FAO and other agencies had been assigned only a marginal role under those arrangements, even where

(Mr. Forbes-Watt, FAO)

the provision of technical support services to projects under national execution was concerned. Available capacities in FAO and other agencies were not being mobilized, thereby depriving the developing countries of vital technical assistance and policy advice. The urgent need to accelerate the full application of the new support cost arrangements had been carefully considered at the recent session of ACC. The issue was of great concern to all the specialized and technical agencies, and should be addressed in the Second Committee's resolution on operational activities. It was also of interest to donors, in view of the need for complementarity and appropriate division of labour, as well as to the developing countries, whose continuing access to the system's technical know-how and neutral policy advice and assistance must be ensured. Constant monitoring and reporting would be required to ensure that the objectives of those arrangements were fully achieved and that the tripartite relationship was strengthened rather than abandoned.

68. Mr. BAHR (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that UNESCO fully supported the statement by FAO, an organization with which it cooperated closely. UNESCO had worked hard to implement General Assembly resolution 44/211 at the country level. Elements such as the resident coordinator and the single country office were means of ensuring the success of national execution and the programme approach. National execution required national empowerment, which in turn required national capacity. UNESCO had worked together with other agencies and Governments at developing such capacity in some 10 countries, through the elaboration of upstream policy as well as national action plans and human resources investment programmes.

69. The mandates of the specialized agencies were complementary; where there were competing interpretations, mandates must be made mutually supportive. The governing bodies of the non-funding specialized agencies must consult closely with those of the funding agencies in order to achieve complementarity in their operational activities for development. Such activities were an integral part of the mandate and activities of UNESCO. The organization's substantive activities would suffer in relevance and in quality if separated from operational activities. For many years, the States members of UNESCO had urged an integration of those activities into coherent agency programmes.

70. Several speakers had emphasized the importance of strengthening, rather than eroding, the development role and capacity of the specialized agencies. Concentrating reform efforts primarily on the funding agencies while deferring the question of how non-funding, specialized agencies could participate in those efforts might lead to a dual development system, which could seriously weaken the effectiveness of the system as a whole. Existing mechanisms for cooperation and the interlinkage of governing bodies within the United Nations system had been designed at a time when the current challenges had not existed. The previous week's meeting of ACC had addressed those issues, and a large majority of that Committee's members had concluded that the current

(Mr. Bahr, UNESCO)

system of development financing linked to the implementation of resolution 44/211 threatened to impair the ability of specialized agencies to provide technical assistance to developing countries and that a review of that process would be needed in 1993.

71. UNESCO agreed that the implementation of resolution 44/211 was slow and unequal to the magnitude of the development task. However, hasty action could be disruptive rather than constructive. Efforts to promote the programme approach and national execution should be pursued, as should more coherent and cost-effective action by the United Nations and its constituent agencies. Improved inter-agency cooperation and consultation should be a transparent process which would greatly enhance the effectiveness of development at the country level, thereby ensuring better use of donor resources.

72. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that the Secretary-General's report on the triennial policy review included useful information on the methodology adopted in assessing progress in the implementation of the guidelines set out in General Assembly resolution 46/219. Regular feedback on the effectiveness of United Nations services should be continued.

73. United Nations operational activities should reflect the changing times and adapt to those changes, since such activities were the only practical means of implementing the various mandates of the United Nations. He welcomed the improved delivery of services by United Nations agencies and commended UNDP for the important steps it had taken to implement resolution 44/211, in particular, those relating to support cost successor arrangements, national execution and the programme approach.

74. Rather than merely identifying areas on which the next triennial review should focus, realistic quantitative and qualitative targets should also be set. Some indication should be given as to the organizations that would have the major responsibility for particular initiatives or tasks and the time-frame within which specific objectives should be achieved. Confusion regarding the programme approach and decentralization needed to be resolved rapidly. UNDP had, commendably, circulated notes on guiding principles for the programme approach, which was much preferable to the project approach. Practical steps needed to be taken to ensure that the programme approach was made fully operational in the wide variety of circumstances prevailing in the developing countries.

75. Resident coordinators must have clear coordinating authority and expanded approval capacity for all United Nations agencies at the country level. They should be given full responsibility for ensuring complementarity and a common approach to meeting the needs of developing countries. Most developing countries had recently been moving away from five-year development plans towards more flexible policy strategy documents to guide their development process. The proposed country strategy notes, to be prepared by resident

(Mr. Singh, Fiji)

coordinators, should focus on areas where the Organization could make a significant contribution to national development priorities and efforts, and should identify areas where joint efforts might be necessary.

76. His delegation fully supported national execution of United Nations-funded projects, but felt that national execution should be preceded by an adequate build-up of national capacities to take over project responsibilities once United Nations assistance had been phased out. Training should therefore be given the highest priority. He welcomed the efforts being made to synchronize all programming cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes with national requirements. Establishing common premises at the country level would greatly assist in the move towards synchronizing programming cycles.

77. Finally, he reiterated his delegation's strong support for the triennial review of operational activities, which had achieved its purpose and which ought to be followed up in order to meet the changing needs of developing countries more fully, eliminate duplication and reduce costs while increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations development assistance.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
24th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 28 October 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman:	Miss DIOP (Vice-Chairman)	(Senegal)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.24
20 November 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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In the absence of Mr. Piriz Ballon (Uruguay), Miss Diop, Vice-Chairman (Senegal), took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (A/47/340, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/391, 499 and 564)

(a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (A/47/419 and Add.1-3)

(b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (A/47/340; E/1992/28)

(c) UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (A/47/312-S/24238; E/1992/28)

(d) UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (A/47/264-E/1992/71; E/1992/29)

(e) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

1. Mrs. ULLOA (Ecuador) said that, with regard to the Secretary-General's Note on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities (A/47/419), structural difficulties combined with a chronic lack of resources had forced the United Nations to scale back its activities in areas essential to the developing countries, many of which continued to be debt burdened by unfavourable trade balances, high inflation and pervasive poverty.

2. The Joint Consultative Group on Policies was aware of the changes that must be made to ensure the effective implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211: more integrated and coordinated programming of United Nations system cooperation; strengthening of the resident coordinator role; harmonization of programming processes and maximum development of national capacities; change of focus from small-scale projects to more concentrated and integrated programmes; and improvements in the structure and composition of the United Nations presence at the country level. Her delegation endorsed that initiative.

3. Lack of coordination between the United Nations system and the various countries was hindering full implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211. Limited resources and lack of technical support had made it difficult for the United Nations to meet its obligations to the developing countries which, in turn, had seen their progress hindered by strict structural adjustment programmes. To compound the problem further, not every industrialized country had been able to provide the agreed level of official development assistance (0.7 per cent of its GNP), thus blocking the growth and development of the developing countries.

4. Ecuador was struggling energetically to overcome the crisis, and had adopted measures which were affecting its citizens harshly. However, the effort had to be a joint one, with the United Nations implementing the reforms

called for in General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the industrialized countries making greater contributions to operational activities for development.

5. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) said that the triennial review would enable the General Assembly to further strengthen operational activities for development, which represented a very important part of multilateral cooperation. The provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211 continued to be relevant; accordingly, it was important to maintain and strengthen activities designed to promote its implementation. At a time when the Organization was restructuring its economic and social sectors, it was worth emphasizing the need to realize the objectives of resolution 44/211 so that the United Nations system might participate in a more coherent, unified, coordinated and cooperative fashion.

6. His delegation believed that it would be premature to adopt a country strategy; in any event, such a strategy would be difficult to implement since there were certain pre-existing problems that were far from being resolved. For example, the programming cycles of the Organization's various institutions were widely disparate and procedures had yet to be harmonized, and the mechanisms of cooperation and coordination in the field were not fully operational. Moreover, political and financial support for operational activities must be consolidated, bearing in mind also that the developing countries' needs for technical assistance were evolving qualitatively and quantitatively.

7. He stressed the importance his delegation placed on decentralization and on giving resident coordinators more opportunities to exercise initiative and make decisions since they were the ones effectively responsible for the coherence of operational activities in the field. Finally, he welcomed the importance given to the role of science and technology in achieving development objectives in the developing countries and, in particular, the means by which science and technology could be integrated into United Nations programming in order to meet effectively the needs of the developing countries.

8. Mr. AKPLOGAN (Benin) said that although, following the events of recent years, the world was no longer divided into two blocs, it remained a world in which inequality of opportunities abounded. Faced with economic and financial difficulties, the developing countries had been obliged to embark on structural adjustment programmes but they still did not have the resources necessary for their development. The United Nations would need to play an increasingly important role in the economic and social sectors by mobilizing resources for the developing countries. Benin was receiving technical and financial assistance from the United Nations designed to strengthen its country's capacity to manage all phases of the development process.

9. Operational activities were being adapted to the new problems, perspectives and needs of the States Members of the United Nations and,

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(Mr. Akplogan, Benin)

accordingly, different institutional mechanisms were being adopted. The diversity of governing bodies and mandates made it difficult for Member States to exercise consistent control. In addition, the resources mobilized for operational activities had not increased in real value and that sector's allotment of official development assistance had declined. Such assistance must be augmented, and the developed countries must make their political will clear by increasing their financial contribution to operational activities for development.

10. The growing interdependence of the various aspects of development, acknowledged in General Assembly resolution 44/221, required more unified action from all sectors of the United Nations system and a new approach in the programming of operational activities. His delegation believed that United Nations organizations must respond with a more cohesive presence at the national level in order to meet the needs of the developing countries. Accordingly, it supported more integrated and coordinated programming of cooperation activities; harmonization of programming processes at the country level; and a shift away from small projects to more concentrated and integrated programmes.

11. Stressing the usefulness of the resident coordinator system, he said that resident coordinators were indispensable for material and financial reasons, and were needed to enhance consistency in United Nations activities at the country level. The unified approach in the field should not, however, lead to a merger of the governing bodies of the main United Nations organs responsible for operational activities. It was more important to harmonize the programming cycles of all the development agencies, and simplify and unify procedures. At the country level, coordination should be up to the recipient country; United Nations support should consist of strengthening the institutions and the capacity of Governments to draw up and implement their development policies and programmes.

12. His delegation noted with satisfaction that UNDP had created a trust fund, known as "Capacity 21", which would be used to help the developing countries formulate and execute sustainable development policies and programmes. He urged the UNDP Governing Council to cooperate with the United Nations system in connection with the implementation of the United Nations new agenda for the development of Africa.

13. Mr. KIM (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the end of the cold war had not had a positive influence on the world economy or on international economic relations. That situation was adversely affecting the operational activities of the United Nations. The implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211 depended on a substantial and urgent increase of financing; his delegation was concerned that the level of resources for operational activities had remained far below the actual requirements of developing countries.

14. Resident coordinators must be able to implement with neutrality,

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

impartiality and cultural sensitivity the programmes by which the United Nations sought to meet a country's needs. To that end, the resident coordinator's tasks must be clearly spelled out. There was a great variety of procedures governing programme and project formulation, appraisal and monitoring, and that inhibited greater national participation in those processes. Simplification of those procedures would facilitate national participation, enhance efficiency and allow for better use of resources.

15. Since recipient countries had primary responsibility for coordinating external assistance, the United Nations should fully respect the right of those countries to choose their own modality when assisting them in setting priorities for development programmes; those priorities should be decided within the country programme context. The United Nations system should help developing countries strengthen their capacity to undertake national execution; in that regard, flexible mechanisms must be employed.

16. His delegation hoped that the triennial review of operational activities would serve as an occasion to facilitate integration of the recommendations of the Rio Conference throughout the United Nations system. Coming at a time when the United Nations was engaged in a restructuring of the economic and social field, reforms should not lead to a reduction of assistance to the developing countries. It was to be hoped that restructuring would give more credibility to the United Nations development system.

17. Mrs. RAHOLINIRINA RADAFIARISOA (Madagascar) said that her delegation noted with satisfaction the decision of the Economic and Social Council to establish an ad hoc working group to develop recommendations on enhancing international cooperation for development, with a view to introducing reforms aimed at ensuring that United Nations operational activities would be better adapted to the new challenges posed by the profound changes that had occurred throughout the world. In that regard, Madagascar supported the programme approach which, however, required certain clarifications and definitions. Its viability would depend, on the one hand, on its being adapted to the economic and social circumstances of the countries and on programming cycles being harmonized according to priorities and needs and, on the other hand, on the availability of technical and operational support to enable national institutions adequately to administer intersectoral and sectoral programmes.

18. As a beneficiary country, Madagascar recognized that it was responsible for managing programmes and projects financed by the United Nations system. However, its ability to fulfil that responsibility fully would depend on its national institutions being directly involved in programme execution. In that regard, there was the problem of how to make the best use of human resources through training, which was a vital element in promoting national execution. Her delegation therefore supported the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/419).

19. Given the multidisciplinary nature of operational activities, there must

(Mrs. Raholinirina Radafiarisoa,
Madagascar)

be adequate coordination at the national level between the agencies of the United Nations system and the international and governmental bodies. The resident coordinators had an important role to play in that regard; that role must be spelled out so as to enable Governments to define their relations with them and with the representatives of other agencies. There must also be a better distribution of duties in the United Nations system so as to avoid duplication and overlapping. The resident coordinators also played a part in keeping the Governments informed regarding technical and scientific projects and their potential for enhancing development efforts.

20. The reforms already initiated with a view to improving the effectiveness and usefulness of operational activities would only be significant if substantial levels of resources were made available on a predictable basis. In allocating the resources, special attention must be paid to the least developed countries. The level of those resources would depend on the political will of the major donors, rather than on a new apportionment of assessments among Member States.

21. The serious problems currently facing developing countries should not change the consensus of 1970 on technical cooperation, the principles of which were still valid: neutrality, universality, non-conditionality, the voluntary and subsidized nature of activities, and the freedom and sovereignty of beneficiary countries in setting their objectives and priorities. Only respect for those principles could ensure a sound basis for international cooperation, which was indispensable in an increasingly interdependent world.

22. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that, in his view, there was consensus on the importance of overcoming duplication and overlapping of items and of optimizing the use of resources for development. It was necessary not only to rationalize the administration of resources, but also to adjust the design and application of programmes to the objectives desired. It was not enough to direct action mainly towards the material aspects of development. Operational activities must focus on investment in human resources and projects must be directed mainly at education, manpower training, instruction in the management of new technologies and public health. In a new international order, agencies should gear their priorities towards human development.

23. All operational activities must be adjusted to the transcendental changes that had recently occurred throughout the world, which had placed people at the centre of multilateral attention. In the triennial review process, programmes must be evaluated in the light of the new goals made necessary by those changes. To that end, the restructuring process must be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and that would entail making substantive and formal changes with a view to overcoming existing problems. It was essential that the parties concerned be flexible in their positions, so as to make it possible to harmonize the different national needs with global interests.

24. His delegation attached great importance to the debate on the

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(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

strengthening of resident coordinators. Their work must guarantee full coordination between the agencies and enhanced national execution of programmes as well as allowing for optimum coordination of activities with governmental priorities and national development plans. That would make it possible to rationalize efforts, to optimize the human and financial resources of the system and to ensure that benefits had a multiplier effect.

25. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that, without wishing to detract in any way from the importance of other programmes and activities such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or the World Food Programme (WFP), he would focus his observations mainly on UNDP. He shared the view that UNDP should increase its efforts to help developing countries develop their national capacity to undertake programmes and project management and execution.

26. The resources available to UNDP were clearly insufficient in relation to the growing needs of the developing countries; the Programme should therefore enjoy increased support from Governments. It was also to be hoped that more attention would be directed to the social and environmental aspects of sustained development, particularly within the framework of structural adjustment policies that should also stimulate economic growth. UNDP should play an important role in defining and promoting the concept of sustainable human development, taking into consideration national priorities. The implementation of Agenda 21 should be a priority for UNDP, whose network could be drafted into the service of the environment, as Israel had suggested at the Rio Conference. UNDP should be one of the main channels for the transfer of applied science and technology to developing countries and should concentrate on those branches of science and technology that might contribute directly to sustainable development. Specific efforts should focus on projects for agricultural development, including the development of arid and semi-arid zones, rural communities and water and energy resources.

27. Israel's approach to rural development problems was based on the notion that the development of human resources was a prerequisite for agricultural development. Israel's rapid economic development had been an integral element of the country's preoccupation with social progress. For more than three decades, Israel had shared its technical experience, bilaterally and multilaterally, with many countries throughout the world. Over 55,000 men and women had taken part in Israeli training programmes in Israel and abroad, and Israel had sent more than 10,000 advisers abroad to participate in the development of agriculture and health and social services, inter alia. Israeli experts had been personally involved in the establishment of institutions and production systems. Their work had provided both a pragmatic and theoretical understanding of the multifaceted process of development in other nations. Israel's own development had been facilitated by a strong infrastructure built around the country's universities and research institutions. Scientific and technological advances were immediately tested in the field by extension workers, who became familiar with applied uses of new technology through a well-organized extension service. The backbone of Israel's development cooperation programme was the belief that human resources

were the most important asset. Israeli training programmes sought to inspire creativity and dedication in trainees, who went home to make breakthroughs while confronting specific local challenges.

28. Mr. CISSE (Senegal) said that his country had no doubt that the triennial review of operational activities would be of use in the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields on the basis of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly the recommendation regarding the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development. That would strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to act, and so contribute significantly to the achievement of development objectives during the 1990s.

29. Firm commitments were needed in the area of operational activities so that the supply of financing would be continuous, predictable and assured, in accordance with the needs of developing countries. Any reform should be accompanied by the capital those countries needed. However, it seemed far from certain that the 1990s would not be another lost decade for development. Official development assistance (ODA), which in the aggregate had remained at less than half of the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) set nearly 20 years before, was not only stagnating but threatening to decline. There had already been a perceptible negative effect on voluntary contributions for operational activities, and fewer projects had been approved, in particular those financed by UNDP. That went far in explaining the delay in implementing General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 46/219. The question of financing should be at the heart of all recommendations made during the current session.

30. The human dimension of development was essential to the objectives of operational activities for the 1990s. It would be difficult for developing countries to take full responsibility for national execution of programmes in the absence of an integrated approach that strengthened national capacities and ensured that the people, and especially women, participated in the programming process. There was a need for strategies that would increase popular participation and lead to the adoption of programmes, methods and structures suited to the diverse economic, social, political and cultural conditions of each country.

31. Obviously, the programming and execution of operational activities were first and foremost the responsibility of developing countries and must be consistent with their national priorities, objectives and plans. There was thus a need for more integrated programming and for a harmonization and simplification of programming procedures for each country. Naturally, that would also entail an effort by the various country-level structures to coordinate and execute the programmes.

32. Senegal was pleased to note that the United Nations had endeavoured to harmonize its programming cycle with those of recipient countries. With regard to the integration of food aid in national sustainable development

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(Mr. Cisse, Senegal)

strategies, the Secretary-General's report (A/47/419) did not supply detailed information, nor did it address the issue of self-sufficiency, which was nevertheless one of the main goals of operational activities for development in the 1990s.

33. His delegation considered that the effectiveness of operational activities at the national level depended on decentralization and the delegation of authority to the resident coordinator, who, as team leader, should have sufficient latitude to carry out his duties effectively. In that way, he would be responsible for formulating, executing and coordinating United Nations activities in the field. However, the use of an integrated approach in the field must reflect the fact that the country strategy was a multidisciplinary one and that reforms could be effective only if they took into consideration the comparative advantage of each process. Given the individual features of each fund or programme and its ability to mobilize resources, financing for the development of operational activities must continue to be the shared responsibility of the various United Nations organizations.

34. Mr. RAMADAN (Egypt) said that the triennial review of operational activities coincided with the discussion in progress on enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres, thereby heightening the importance of international cooperation for development. It should be emphasized, however, that the development process was the responsibility of Governments. The resident coordinator system should be strengthened both in the field and at headquarters, in order to improve coordination to benefit the developing countries. It would also be useful to take a more unified approach at the national level; the United Nations country strategy could improve coordination and lead to better use of resources available for operational activities.

35. Egypt was concerned by the current level of resources and renewed its appeal for an increase in ODA in order to reach the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. The current economic crisis had caused serious problems in the developing world, and in spite of the economic reform and structural adjustment programmes implemented by many developing countries, the unilateral efforts and scarce resources of those countries were insufficient to overcome them. Egypt, despite its problems and the needs generated by its reform programme, had decided to increase its contribution to the operational activities of the United Nations system by 10 per cent over the previous year, in order to strengthen those vital activities.

36. Egypt believed that military expenditures must be redirected towards the attainment of development objectives in developing countries and that military industries must be converted to industries for peaceful purposes.

37. Mr. LIMON (Suriname) said that while his delegation agreed with the content of the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial review of operational activities, the fundamental characteristics of those activities

(Mr. Limon, Suriname)

must be maintained. In addition, their universality, their voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and multilateralism must be ensured, and their execution should benefit developing countries in accordance with their development plans, priorities and objectives.

38. Suriname appreciated the focus on human resource development and agreed that it was essential to improve access for all, in particular for those most in need, to food, water, housing, health care and education as a basis for human development.

39. The shift from a project to a programme approach required the participation of Governments in the execution of activities, in order to achieve greater coherence and impact, and the harmonization of programming cycles of the various agencies with those of Governments.

40. The effectiveness of operational activities also depended on the availability of the necessary human resources and expertise in recipient countries, as well as on government participation in programme execution. Thus national capacity-building was essential if recipient country resources were to be utilized and strengthened in programme execution.

41. Mr. RAICHEV (Bulgaria) said that the United Nations had the potential to cope with the magnitude and complexity of the changes taking place in the sphere of social and economic development; Bulgaria commended the efforts to establish human-centred development and to find new forms of effective cooperation to meet countries' needs through a comprehensive and integrated approach that would enable the Organization to respond to the growing demands for assistance, utilizing its comparative advantage.

42. The basic principles contained in General Assembly resolution 44/211 should serve as a basis for further reforms in programming and the full utilization of national capacities. Both donor and recipient countries should further strengthen the operational activities of the United Nations system by preserving their universality, neutrality and voluntary nature. It was also necessary to make those activities more efficient and to coordinate them with other multilateral and bilateral arrangements.

43. His delegation shared the view that technical cooperation must be incorporated into national development efforts and that Governments had the primary responsibility for effective programme execution. In that context, attention should be focused on the development and strengthening of national capacities for the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of technical cooperation programmes and activities as a prerequisite for national execution; however, that modality should not exclude the utilization of the experience and knowledge of the specialized agencies and regional commissions.

44. Global integration and rapid scientific and technological advances required more flexible programming of technical cooperation. Greater interdependence called for a more coherent multisectoral response in order to

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(Mr. Raichev, Bulgaria)

solve problems effectively. The shift from a project to a programme approach was therefore commendable, although individual projects should not be entirely abandoned where they yielded positive results. In that regard, UNDP might still wish to consider funding some regional projects of proven usefulness that were supported by recipient and donor countries.

45. The decentralization of activities and authority would help to meet the needs of recipient countries more effectively and strengthen coordination with Governments. The new United Nations office at Sofia would help to increase and enhance cooperation between Bulgaria and various United Nations agencies.

46. He commended efforts to coordinate UNDP activities with those of United Nations executing agencies and other specialized agencies outside the system. However, other opportunities might be found to facilitate greater UNDP involvement in projects and programmes financed from various sources and closer cooperation between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions.

47. Bulgaria welcomed United Nations efforts to take a new approach to technical cooperation activities and hoped that those measures would promote the achievement of the development objectives and priorities of recipient countries. Bulgaria also commended the support provided to countries undergoing the transition to a market economy and democracy. Developments in Central and Eastern Europe posed tremendous challenges, but the United Nations, on the basis of the principle of universality, should respond to the needs for assistance of all countries without decreasing its assistance to the least developed countries. The ongoing process of restructuring United Nations activities in the social and economic sector would enhance the Organization's effectiveness and efficiency and would make it more responsive to the challenges of development.

48. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that the current debate on operational activities for development was taking place amid a new phase in the development of the social and economic sectors of the United Nations. The general decision to restructure and intensify the system's activities beginning with operational activities could lead to the adoption of concrete measures which would significantly strengthen the Organization's authority.

49. The documents before the Committee, in particular the comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system (A/47/419), showed that the international community had been prepared to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211. However, it must be agreed that the attainment of the objectives set forth in the resolution would require much more time, greater imagination, more intensive efforts and the allocation of more resources than initially envisaged.

50. Many delegations had arrived at similar conclusions and made similar assessments. As there had not been wide differences of opinion with respect to the methods of restructuring, it could be assumed that agreement on reform

(Mr. Goumenny, Ukraine)

could quickly be reached. As far as resolution 44/211 was concerned, its provisions were still valid and its full implementation would consolidate the principles of universality, multilateralism and non-conditionality of operational activities.

51. The work of the different bodies of the United Nations should be structured to reflect the positive political changes taking place in the world, the growing interdependence of States and the globalization of the economy; the basis for that effort should be the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the related International Development Strategy as it had been conceived for the decade beginning in 1991. Such cooperation work should do its utmost, basically in the Eastern and Central European countries, to alleviate their serious environmental and economic problems.

52. After praising the Secretary-General's report entitled Activities of the United Nations System in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (A/47/419/Add.3), prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/40, and reaffirming the importance of an integrated United Nations system approach to that region, he noted that one of the initial benefits of such an approach would be the establishment of an integrated United Nations office in the country in conformity with an agreement which had already been signed between the national Government and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He expressed the hope that the future office, headed by a resident coordinator, would be a main channel of technical assistance to Ukraine and would serve to attract external financial resources to the country.

53. After stressing the decision of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to grant Ukraine, among other countries in transition, the status of a recipient of assistance and beneficiary of programmes under the fifth programming cycle, he said that UNDP should also coordinate special assistance programmes for Ukraine as part of the decentralization of operational activities and strengthening of the country approach. Moreover, different United Nations agencies represented in Ukraine would share common facilities which would improve the efficiency of the work of the integrated United Nations office and reduce its initial establishment cost.

54. The report of the mission on the crisis and the changes made in order to meet human needs was a penetrating and accurate analysis of the situation in Ukraine with respect to health care in general and maternal and child health in particular. Its recommendations deserved to be taken into consideration in specific practical programmes. Ukraine attached the greatest importance to the activities of UNICEF for mothers and children and would be gratified if the assistance programmes developed at the World Summit for Children were also applied to the children affected by the Chernobyl disaster. Both the work of UNICEF and that of UNDP must form a significant part of the activities developed by the integrated United Nations office in the area of technical assistance to Ukraine.

55. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana) said that the comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system provided an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive review of the entire process by which the United Nations system delivered technical assistance to developing countries and to consider the main reasons why it had not been possible to implement General Assembly resolution 44/211. There was no doubt that the difficulties pointed out in the Secretary-General's note (A/47/419) could be tackled. However, it should be stressed that the introduction of fundamental reforms into a system composed of many organizations could defeat the very purpose of the reforms if it was not pursued with some circumspection.

56. The enhanced interdependence of the various dimensions of development required greater coherence of action by the United Nations system. The United Nations had been able to help many developing countries implement national strategies in human development, including the advancement of women, poverty eradication programmes, population and other social and economic priority programmes. Indeed, new approaches to the programming of operational activities were required if the United Nations system was to be effective in meeting its challenges. General Assembly resolution 44/211 had recognized the new dimensions of development when it called for more integrated and coordinated programming of United Nations cooperation processes.

57. The inadequacy of financial resources to fund operational activities in developing countries had been an important obstacle to implementation of projects and programmes needed to promote their economic development. In its Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular, the revitalization of the economic growth and development of the developing countries, contained in the annex of its resolution S-18/3, the General Assembly had called for special concessionary resources to enable the developing countries, especially the least developed countries, to cope with the challenges of the 1990s. Developed countries had been urged to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) to official development assistance (ODA) and 0.15 per cent of GNP as ODA for the least developed countries. The first target had proved unattainable, while the second had, in most cases, not been achieved.

58. The report of the Secretary-General (A/47/419) referred to the advancement of a genuine international consensus on development cooperation. He hoped that would lead to increased contributions to the operational activities for development.

59. With the reaffirmation of the importance of human development by the United Nations system had come qualitative changes in its operational activities. As regarded the programme approach, the lack of a precise definition of the term and the conceptual differences among the various agencies had affected programming activities and caused delays in the approval of programmes. However, the shift from a project approach to a programme approach was widely welcomed by recipient and donor countries because it was adapted to specific country requirements.

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(Mr. Naadjie, Ghana)

60. His delegation was hopeful that the current triennial review would address the obstacles to a full implementation of that programme approach to the development needs of developing countries. National execution continued to be an important modality, as was national capacity-building through the use of local consultants and the return of talent.

61. The coordination of the operational activities of the United Nations system was still a source of concern. For those activities to be effective, and for the delivery system to achieve maximum impact, it was essential to consult with recipient Governments and to strengthen the role of the resident coordinators. Lastly, the Committee had the task of putting forward proposals and recommendations that would provide clear guidance on the matter. General Assembly resolution 44/211 laid out a framework within which at least some of the aspirations of developing countries could be met. The experience gained from reviewing the implementation of that resolution should allow a critical but constructive look at operational activities in the context of a changing world, in order to achieve the rationalization, coordination and harmonization of the activities of all agencies of the United Nations system.

62. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that the first goal of operational activities was to help the developing countries to build or strengthen their national capacity and to take advantage of the scientific and technical knowledge available within and outside of the United Nations system, within the context of their national development plans and strategies.

63. It was unfortunate to note that the total resources available for operational activities were not enough to meet the growing needs of the developing countries, which had to confront poverty, population growth and environmental deterioration in an international climate marked by the debt crisis and rising protectionism. The donor community must therefore increase its contributions in an adequate and predictable way and the funds available must be put to better use by eliminating duplication of work, inappropriate priorities and excessive administrative costs. The UNDP report on human development had made it clear that official development assistance funds used to meet essential human needs like basic education, primary health care, clean water supply and sanitation services, family planning and nutrition came to no more than 6.5 per cent of bilateral assistance and 9.9 per cent of multilateral assistance. Other studies showed that only 25 per cent of the multilateral technical cooperation funds actually reached the developing countries; the remaining 75 per cent went to the international organizations in the form of administrative costs or returned to the developed countries in the form of consultancy fees and equipment costs.

64. The project approach entailed a complex procedure involving transactions between the technical departments of the beneficiary Government and the organizations of the United Nations system. The result of such transactions was a compilation of projects known as the country programme, in which the wish to satisfy the various requests prevailed over the need to ensure a coherent whole, with the hope that the cumulative effect of the projects would

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(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

necessarily be beneficial. Actually, experience had shown that those small projects hardly affected the general development of the recipient country because they were not integrated into its national strategy.

65. His delegation welcomed the fact that the project approach would henceforward be replaced by another known as the programme approach, which would make operational activities more coherent by reducing the wastage engendered by a multiplicity of projects. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy was making laudable efforts to develop more specific terminology and concepts having to do with taking the programme approach.

66. The system of resident coordinators, as now set up, did not permit proper coordination of operational activities or offer a comprehensive, multidisciplinary response to the needs of recipient countries. In fact, the resident coordinators were compelled to carry out a great variety of tasks with minimal human and financial resources. Furthermore, the fact that they worked for UNDP often kept them from being able to count on staff support from the field offices of other agencies of the United Nations system. For all those reasons, Morocco approved of the establishment of common facilities that operated in an integrated way, and endorsed the idea of giving the resident coordinator greater authority, in order to make technical cooperation activities more relevant to the situation in the countries. Moreover, experience had shown that Headquarters approval procedures often caused delays and unduly weakened the decision-making power of the representatives in the field.

67. The principle of national execution was taking hold throughout the developing world. His delegation was surprised that some considered it a threat to the technical function of the specialized agencies. When a country had the necessary technical capacity, the specialized agencies should devote themselves to providing the experience and resources that were needed to increase its expertise.

68. Despite the progress made, the Secretary-General recognized in his report that the diversity and multiplicity of procedures followed by the United Nations in formulating, evaluating and supervising programmes and projects impeded national execution. Consequently, he recommended that those procedures should be harmonized and simplified. Evaluation criteria should be established to determine the extent to which a project contributed to reinforcing national action in a given sector. Lastly, his delegation believed that the provisions of resolution 44/211 still applied, even though they were so complex that several years would be needed to implement it as a whole.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
25th meeting
held on
Thursday, 29 October 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.25
5 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (A/47/344, A/47/440-S/24558)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR (A/47/288-E/1992/94)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (A/47/187, A/47/291-E/1992/95, A/47/337, A/47/420-S/24519, A/47/455, A/47/528, A/47/539, A/47/553, A/47/554, A/47/562, A/47/573)

AGENDA ITEM 88: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (A/47/531)

1. Mr. ELIASSON (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), contained in document A/47/288. Although UNDRO had been absorbed into the newly established Department of Humanitarian Affairs, its activities would remain based in Geneva. It was to be hoped that the closer integration of all aspects of response to disasters, both man-made and natural, would enhance the effectiveness of the Office's work. The secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction would continue as a separate entity within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and would work closely with the Disaster Mitigation Branch of UNDRO. He voiced concern that more than 40 per cent of UNDRO staffing and associated costs needed to be met by voluntary contributions and expressed appreciation for the extrabudgetary support Member States had provided. He hoped that those items could ultimately be funded from the regular budget.

2. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia (A/47/528), he drew attention also to an informal status report available to Committee members which provided further details on the emergency humanitarian activities in progress and identified new resource requirements. It had been decided not to issue a second appeal in mid-1992 for the emergency relief programme in Liberia in the hope that the political situation would improve. However, there had been a recent escalation of fighting. He welcomed the call by the Economic Community of West African States on 20 October for an immediate cease-fire and the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro IV accord. In the meantime, the humanitarian needs of the population in Liberia and of Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries would require full funding of the previous appeal as well as the supplementary resource requirements identified in the Secretary-General's report. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs would continue to monitor the situation in Liberia closely and hoped to present a revised programme reflecting a transition from emergency assistance to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in the near future.

(Mr. Eliasson)

3. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/47/531), he said that that country, like Liberia, seemed poised on the verge of a political reconciliation which would permit the reorientation of the emergency humanitarian assistance programmes. While United Nations efforts had continued to focus on the humanitarian needs of the population, the second phase of the Special Relief Programme for Angola also included rehabilitation components. Angola had been included in the consolidated United Nations/Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) appeal for the drought emergency in southern Africa, the response to which had been disappointing. It was the non-food aid components of both the Special Relief Programme and the joint appeal which were most seriously underfunded. His Department had recently initiated consultations with a view to ensuring that Angola's urgent humanitarian requirements were met; failure to address those needs might undermine the process of political reconciliation, and he therefore urged a full and timely response.

4. The Secretary-General's report on assistance to Mozambique (A/47/539) pointed out that efforts in that country had been aimed at alleviating the combined impact of natural disasters and civil conflict. The recent, if fragile, prospects for a solution to the political conflict did not diminish the need for sustained efforts to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of the people of Mozambique; in fact, the United Nations had been called upon to expand its relief programmes to cover all parts of the country. The signing of the recent General Peace Agreement for Mozambique brought to the fore the problems of demobilizing troops and the repatriation of over 1.5 million refugees from neighbouring countries. A committee for humanitarian assistance had been established at Maputo under the chairmanship of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Emergency Relief Operations; it had formulated a unified plan for the delivery of humanitarian relief throughout the country which had been submitted to both the Government and the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO). While the Government had accepted the proposal, RENAMO had not yet responded.

5. Immediate action by the international community was needed if a tragedy in Mozambique was to be averted: as a result of drought and civil strife, millions of Mozambicans faced starvation. Moreover, failure to act promptly could endanger the still fragile process of political reconciliation. He therefore urged full funding of the needs identified in the 1992-1993 emergency programme for Mozambique and the United Nations/SADCC appeal for the drought emergency in southern Africa. His Department would continue to monitor the situation carefully.

6. Turning to he report of the Secretary-General on emergency assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia (A/47/553), he said that there were no words to describe the tragic situation of that country. His recent visit to Somalia had convinced him of the great need for urgent action and a clear distribution of responsibility.

(Mr. Eliasson)

Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), non-governmental organizations and the United Nations were working very hard under extremely difficult conditions. One result of his mission had been the recently endorsed 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance. Steps were being taken to strengthen coordination in the field through the office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance under the overall authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. He welcomed the appointment of the president of CARE (USA) as operational manager for the programme; cooperation between non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies was crucial to the success of the work in Somalia. He expressed appreciation also to the World Bank for a grant of $20 million to the people of Somalia, to be distributed by the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

7. He hoped that the deployment of United Nations military forces would improve the security situation, which was impeding the implementation of effective humanitarian assistance in Somalia. The 100-Day Action Programme would be an important test of the international community's ability to provide humanitarian aid in situations of extreme political fragility.

8. Operation Lifeline Sudan, the subject of another report by the Secretary-General (A/47/554), had represented a significant breakthrough in United Nations humanitarian activities because it had sought to deliver humanitarian assistance to all in need, even in situations of civil conflict. Difficulties facing the operation included access, transportation, a lack of security and problematic relations with non-governmental organizations, yet many of those in desperate need had been reached. During his recent visit to the area, the Government of the Sudan and the various factions of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army had reaffirmed their support of the operation's basic principles. Agreement had been reached on the opening of 21 new airlift destinations and improved conditions for non-governmental organizations. Follow-up and assessment missions would be sent to parts of the Sudan not previously reached.

9. Towards the end of August 1992, two UNICEF staff members had been killed while on mission in southern Sudan. The Secretary-General had indicated that the Sudanese People's Liberation Army should be held accountable for those deaths. Assurances had been received from all parties of their commitment to protect humanitarian relief workers, and security procedures were being renewed to ensure that all possible protective measures were in force.

10. There had been persistent shortfalls in the funding of non-food aid components of emergency humanitarian assistance by the international community. The delay between commitment and delivery had often precluded the efficient management of relief supplies. Because emergency situations were by their very nature unpredictable, he appealed to the donor community to permit greater flexibility in the use of its contributions. The United Nations was

(Mr. Eliasson)

increasingly being called upon to provide humanitarian assistance in situations of political uncertainty and physical insecurity. Consequently, it was important to reach agreement on programmes and to ensure that such programmes effectively attacked the root causes of the problems. It was also important to provide reasonable protection for relief personnel and supplies. The international community could not permit the continuation of gross, cowardly and self-defeating violations of international humanitarian law. A balance must be struck between solidarity with those in need and concern for the safety of relief personnel.

11. Effective responses to emergency situations were necessarily collective. Non-governmental organizations such as ICRC and the International Organization for Migration were full partners and must be involved in the formulation and implementation of assistance programmes. Regional organizations also had a vital role to play, especially in dealing with issues of political reconciliation. It was the task of national authorities to provide guidance and support for those activities; the Department of Humanitarian Affairs sought to bring all the actors together in a coherent and coordinated effort to ensure a life of dignity for all.

12. Mr. OMAYAD (Director and Officer-in-Charge, Department of Political Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (A/47/291-E/1992/95), recalled that the United Nations had consistently provided significant emergency and humanitarian relief assistance to Lebanon throughout the period of civil strife. The subsequent consolidation of authority by the Lebanese Government and other encouraging developments had made it possible for the Organization to focus on the need for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. The programme of United Nations Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon was now fully operational. A resident coordinator had been present in Beirut since January 1992, and other United Nations programmes and specialized agencies had re-established or upgraded their presence in Lebanon. The United Nations system, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), had extended full cooperation and support to the resident coordinator, and a strong and integrated United Nations programme was being developed, with priority given to resettlement of the displaced, drug control, institutional capacity-building and humanitarian assistance. Coordination at the field level was complemented by coordination at the central level by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Meetings with the representatives of all United Nations programmes and agencies with activities in Lebanon were held regularly in New York.

13. Lebanon was in urgent need of large-scale assistance from the international community to rebuild its infrastructure and economy after 17 years of violent conflict. However, the role of the United Nations was largely catalytic, and could not be effective without strong support from the donor community. Progress had clearly been made during the past year. However, the political uncertainty of recent months had adversely affected the

(Mr. Omayad)

economic situation, which in turn had affected living conditions. The new Lebanese Government's Council for Development and Reconstruction still planned to launch an emergency rehabilitation programme in 1993, in which the United Nations would be actively involved. He hoped that the World Bank would be in a position to convene a consultative group meeting in 1993. Naturally, peace and stability in the region would promote national security, which was essential for an economic and social environment conducive to reconstruction and development.

14. Mr. LOUP (Coordinator of Assistance to the Least Developed Countries, United Nations Development Programme), drew attention to document A/47/337, containing summary reports on special programmes of economic assistance to Benin, the Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Ecuador, Madagascar, Vanuatu and Yemen. Seven of those countries had been included in the list of least developed countries established by the General Assembly. The reports focused on 1991 and approximately the first half of 1992 and thus closely reflected the countries' current priority social and economic needs and the ways in which the international community was responding to those needs.

15. At the round-table conferences of donors convened between 1990 and 1992 and at follow-up sectoral meetings, the Governments concerned had entered into a dialogue with donor agencies and institutions concerning their social and economic priorities and could now proceed to implement plans and programmes in the light of indications of future financing from domestic and donor sources. The report described the progress of the round-table process as it concerned Benin, the Central African Republic, Chad and the Republic of Yemen.

16. Several of the countries were carrying out structural adjustment programmes, and donor assistance was needed to implement the required adjustments and alleviate the social hardships of groups most adversely affected by them. While the international community had responded to the pressing needs of the countries concerned, its strong and sustained support would continue to be vital if those countries were to overcome their current difficulties and achieve their goals for economic and social advancement.

17. Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the question of special economic and disaster relief assistance was of the utmost importance. A number of long-standing humanitarian crises persisted and many new emergency situations had emerged, some of which were a direct result of transformations on the global political scene. The situation in many parts of Africa and several least developed countries was particularly alarming. He drew attention in that connection to the plight of the people of Somalia and the countries of the Horn of Africa.

18. It was increasingly evident that the humanitarian needs of affected countries concerned the entire international community. The United Nations had a crucial and growing role to play in providing humanitarian, special economic and disaster relief assistance through its operational agencies and

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as a catalyst for the efforts of Governments and regional and non-governmental organizations. In discharging its challenging responsibilities, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs must be guided by the principles set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182.

19. Furthermore, emergency assistance should be provided in a manner supportive of recovery and long-term development, which were essential to strengthen the ability of the developing countries to cope with natural disasters and other emergencies. The inadequacy of resources to deal with emergencies had been a major constraint on the effective response of the United Nations in the past, and the Organization should therefore be provided with additional voluntary resources for that purpose. The Group of 77 was pleased that the consolidated appeal mechanism had proved effective.

20. Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that the reports before the Committee demonstrated with overwhelming intensity how intimately peace and development were related. The use of food and other emergency relief supplies to pursue military, ideological or religious goals was totally unacceptable. The situation in southern Sudan, for example, was a matter of grave concern. In response to the consolidated appeal for Somalia, her Government had decided to allocate 10 million Austrian schillings to WFP and 2 million Austrian schillings to ICRC.

21. She proposed that the Committee should draft a single omnibus resolution on all the countries covered by special programmes of economic assistance, rather than separate resolutions on each one. The Committee's work would gain in efficiency, and a single comprehensive resolution would be just as effective in terms of mobilizing support. General Assembly resolutions 43/211 and 46/108 were precedents for such an approach.

22. Mr. HADDAD (World Bank) said that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, the World Bank had established excellent working relations with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. The Bank and the Department shared the view that emergency assistance should be supportive of recovery and long-term development, that the disaster prevention and mitigation capacity of developing countries should be strengthened and that contributions to humanitarian assistance should not be made at the expense of resources for international development cooperation.

23. The Bank's experience in the case of the drought in southern Africa had demonstrated the potential for mitigating the worst consequences of drought when cooperation was established early between contributors and recipient Governments within the context of the adjustment process. As a result of a consolidated appeal launched earlier in the year, adjustment financing requirements had been expanded to include necessary food and recovery imports for Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and commitments of $310 million had been made.

(Mr. Haddad, World Bank)

24. The Bank had recently approved a grant of $20 million in support of the 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia which would be used to purchase emergency food and medical supplies for the people in famine-stricken areas of the country and Somali refugees who had fled to Djibouti, Ethopia and Kenya. An exception had been made in the case of Somalia to the Bank's customary procedure of authorizing loans guaranteed by recipient Governments.

25. Mr. WATSON (United States of America) recalled the remarks which President Bush had made to the General Assembly on the question of humanitarian assistance in September 1992. Many of the crises to which the international community was called upon to respond were man-made. The growing disaster in the Sudan, where both the Government and rebel leaders had shown astonishing indifference to the welfare of civilians in the southern part of the country, was a vivid example. The Government had adopted its own form of ethnic cleansing, and his delegation was outraged by the summary execution of local employees of relief organizations. The international community must not stand by in face of such reprehensible acts.

26. His delegation called upon the Government of the Sudan and the other parties to the conflict to respond to the growing humanitarian crisis and facilitate the efforts of the United Nations, other donors and private and voluntary organizations to assist those Sudanese in need of humanitarian relief. They must respect international humanitarian law, including provisions prohibiting summary punishment, as set forth in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and give a full accounting of the summary execution of relief personnel. Arbitrary relocations must cease and international relief organizations must be given access to those in need of assistance. Surplus grain and meat that was to be exported should be offered to relief organizations for distribution within the country. Finally, he called upon all parties to honour the recent agreement concluded with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to expand humanitarian relief efforts in the country and approve relief corridors in the south. If the parties to the conflict did not heed the warnings of the international community, tragedy would befall the Sudanese people.

27. His delegation had no illusions about the magnitude of the effort that would be required to resolve the security and logistical obstacles to the delivery of food, medicine and relief supplies needed to stop the dying in Somalia. His own country fully supported the commendable humanitarian efforts under way there: the United Nations 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance merited strong support. The United States had provided $190 million in assistance to Somalia since the beginning of 1991. It continued to operate an emergency aid supply airlift and had mounted a major effort to provide food through commercial channels. Rehabilitation assistance was also critical, particularly in areas where local leaders were willing to resolve disputes peacefully. Security must also be bolstered as a matter of urgency so that food supplies would be delivered.

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(Mr. Watson, United States)

28. In Mozambique, the effects of the drought had been magnified by armed conflict, and the delivery of humanitarian relief had been obstructed by security problems. Although more assistance would be required, donors had already responded generously to Mozambique's needs. His own country had provided $165 million during the past year. With the recent signing of the General Peace Agreement, there were signs that the countryside was being opened up to relief shipments. His delegation urged the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO to intensify their cooperation with United Nations agencies and the donor community to ensure that relief reached the neediest areas as soon as possible.

29. The resumption of hostilities in Liberia intensified the need for emergency assistance to victims of the civil war. His country had donated more than $200 million and urged other donors to contribute to the United Nations appeal as soon as possible.

30. Special attention must also be paid to Angola. His country, along with others, had provided substantial assistance to help Angola begin its long recovery from years of internal conflict. However, the continuing process of national reconciliation would require additional support for the run-off election, the completion of troop demobilization, the repatriation and resettlement of refugees and the internally displaced and the reintegration of demobilized troops.

31. There were many other countries which desperately needed emergency humanitarian relief. His country remained ready to support all peoples who wished to build strong economies and participates in a community of nations dedicated to world peace and prosperity.

32. Mr. WANG Xinggen (China) said that the figures provided in the Secretary-General's report on UNDRO (A/47/288) attested to the enhancement of the Office's capacity to mobilise the international community in providing assistance to disaster-stricken areas. His delegation appreciated the active role played by UNDRO in that effort.

33. As disaster prevention and mitigation were crucial to developing countries, which had weak infrastructures and limited prevention and preparedness capabilities, a major task was the establishment and improvement of early warning systems covering natural disasters and the application of existing advanced technologies in disaster relief and mitigation projects. All countries should have access to information relating to disaster prevention and mitigation and to applications of new technology. The relevant United Nations bodies should promote exchanges of information and the dissemination and application of new technology.

34. While commending those countries that had seen to the timely replenishment of stocks at the UNDRO warehouse at Pisa, he pointed out that since disasters differed in nature and the victims had different needs for

(Mr. Wang Xinggen, China)

relief materials, considerable attention should be devoted to the categories and quantities of items stocked with a view to preventing waste or loss of materials and higher storage costs.

35. His delegation supported the international community's efforts to provide assistance to Angola, which had done much to bring about its own economic rehabilitation. Regrettably, the external assistance provided fell far short of Angola's needs; he therefore appealed to all countries in a position to do so to assist Angola. China believed that the implementation of the Peace Accords by all parties to the conflict in Angola would contribute to the country's rehabilitation and reconstruction.

36. Although China was a developing country and a disaster-prone one, it had none the less provided relief assistance to other developing countries such as Angola, the Sudan, Somalia and Mozambique. He expressed the hope that countries with the ability and technology to do so would help the developing countries enhance their disaster prevention and mitigation capabilities so that they could increasingly rely on their own efforts in combating natural disasters, thereby minimizing the losses resulting from such disasters.

37. Mr. PREDA (Romania) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the work of UNDRO (A/47/288) reflected an impressive degree of international solidarity. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the increase not only in public awareness but also in responsiveness. The fact that the role of UNDRO in providing fast relief and in channelling international aid had grown continuously proved its capacity to manage complex situations.

38. The range of disasters demanding an international response was growing increasingly complex, ranging from natural phenomena such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes to man-made disasters such as population movements and civil unrest. Accordingly, new strategies, a strengthening of the coordination role of UNDRO and a new emphasis on the cost-effectiveness of relief operations were required. His delegation welcomed the close and efficient coordination which existed among UNDRO, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, other United Nations agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

39. Romania appreciated the efforts of UNDRO to improve preparedness activities and to provide a better response to disasters, such as the search and rescue projects, improvement of communications and the Disaster Management Training Programme. The efforts made in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction were well focused.

40. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) said that his delegation highly valued the work of UNDRO and the dedication it had consistently demonstrated in addressing increasingly diverse and complex disasters and emergencies in recent years. Against that background, his Government had strengthened its financial support for various UNDRO programmes; for example, it had contributed $140 million for

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disbursement to international relief agencies engaged in assisting refugees and displaced persons who had been forced to flee Iraq and Kuwait during the Gulf crisis.

41. The disaster information service provided by UNDRO had greatly contributed to ensuring a swift and appropriate response to requests for relief assistance and therefore deserved the Committee's appreciation. His delegation strongly hoped that under the Department for Humanitarian Affairs, the natural disaster management functions, especially those in the field of information services formerly carried out by UNDRO, would not only continue to receive due attention but would in fact be strengthened. The Government of Japan, for its part, had launched a number of relief activities in 1992, including the dispatch of several relief teams to countries that had suffered natural disasters and the delivery of emergency relief supplies worth $1.2 million to countries such as Turkey, Papua New Guinea and Nicaragua.

42. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs was to be commended for taking the initiative, in collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, in organizing the coordination meeting on humanitarian assistance for Somalia and for underscoring the gravity of the problems in that country as well as for coordinating humanitarian activities by donor Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia, which had been reviewed at the coordination meeting, laid the foundation for more consolidated and expanded assistance to that country.

43. The situation in Somalia was an enormous tragedy requiring a commensurate response by the international community. Japan, like other countries, had been seriously concerned about conditions in Somalia and had actively participated in the discussions leading to the adoption of resolutions on the situation by the Security Council. His Government had extended a total of $5 million to the United Nations peace-keeping operation in Somalia and strongly hoped that the early deployment of additional peace-keeping forces throughout the country would lead to the re-establishment of minimum security conditions that would permit the delivery of humanitarian supplies. He strongly appealed to all Somali parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint and to enter into talks aimed at national reconciliation.

44. His Government especially appreciated the field activities undertaken by international and non-governmental organizations and had contributed over $10 million to those organizations for the provision of food, medicine and other relief materials to the Somali people in Somalia and in neighbouring countries. After paying a tribute to the Governments that had been actively involved in airlift operations, he said that Japan was currently in the process of determining its contribution to that effort and was considering additional assistance based upon the 100-Day Action Programme.

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(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

45. His Government was also deeply concerned over the situation in the Sudan and found the reports of human rights violations by government authorities and the armed forces there to be profoundly disturbing. Japan believed that such a situation must not be tolerated and had taken a number of concrete measures, including the suspension, except for purely humanitarian and emergency relief, of all official development assistance to the Sudan until it was assured that such human rights violations had ceased. Japan had also encouraged the Sudanese Government to take steps to improve its deteriorating relations with the international community.

46. His Government welcomed the encouraging developments in Mozambique and supported the General Peace Agreement, which provided a solid foundation for the implementation, on a greatly expanded scale, of humanitarian assistance by the international community. With respect to recent reports of cease-fire violations, his Government joined other members of the international community in appealing to the parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint. His Government had extended $3.4 million in emergency humanitarian assistance to help alleviate the suffering of the people of Mozambique and had contributed $4.1 million through WFP for the Mozambican people in Mozambique as well as those protected as refugees in Malawi and Zimbabwe.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

Draft resolution on the net transfer of resources between developing countries and developed countries (A/C.2/47/L.10)

47. Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and the People's Republic of China, introduced the draft resolution and expressed the sponsors' hope that it would receive the unanimous approval of the Committee.

Draft resolution on the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (A/C.2/47/L.12)

48. Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and the People's Republic of China, introduced the draft resolution, which he hoped would be unanimously endorsed by the Committee.

Draft resolution on assistance to Yemen (A/C.2/47/L.11)

49. Mr. AHMIA (Algeria) introduced the draft resolution and expressed the hope that the Committee would reach a consensus on it.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
26th meeting
held on
Thursday, 29 October 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Miss DIOP (Vice-Chairman)	(Senegal)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.26
23 November 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/47/344, A/47/440-S/24558)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR (continued) (A/47/288-E/1992/94)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/47/187, A/47/291-E/1992/95, A/47/337, A/47/420-S/24519, A/47/455, 528, 539, 553, 554, 562 and 573)

AGENDA ITEM 88: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued) (A/47/531)

1. Mr. VALENZUELA (Honduras) said that the 129 natural disasters that had occurred worldwide from January to September 1992 demonstrated that disasters were becoming more frequent, in conjunction with climate changes that altered their nature. Their consequences were catastrophic for the fragile economies of the developing countries, which needed the assistance of the United Nations and donor countries to help them deal with the emergency situations. Recognition must be given in that connection to the valuable contribution of international agencies working in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations such as Caritas and CARE.

2. The proclamation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction had been an occasion for intensifying UNDRO activities and for reflecting on the United Nations capability to prevent and mitigate natural disasters. Since its establishment in March 1972, UNDRO had acted to coordinate and exchange information on assistance needs and contributions from donor countries, in addition to mobilizing and coordinating the assistance of the agencies of the United Nations system, for which it organized missions, raised funds for assistance and advised Governments. However, UNDRO did not have enough financial resources to respond adequately to the continuous emergency requests from all over the world. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had clearly acknowledged that fact in many resolutions requesting an increase in UNDRO resources.

3. At the first Ministerial Conference of the Countries of the Central American Isthmus and the Caribbean Community, held in Honduras in January 1992, a permanent mechanism was established to promote greater cooperation between the two regions on joint initiatives in areas like the environment and natural disasters. One commendable initiative was the prevention and rehabilitation training programme being executed by UNDRO in Central America with UNDP support. Regular consultations were being held in

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(Mr. Valenzuela, Honduras)

Honduras, primarily to prevent and mitigate winter floods, and the implementation of regional projects was being encouraged, like the network of silos for the storage of basic grains and other such projects intended to strengthen national rapid-response capability. However, those efforts had to be supplemented by support from the international community.

4. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

5. Mr. CASTANEDA (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), said that humanitarian assistance needs were not simply national or local problems but a priority for the international community. The United Nations had an important role to play through its own programmes and as a catalyst and unifier of the efforts of Governments and non-governmental organizations. The establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should permit a more efficient and effective response by the United Nations in cases of natural disaster. El Salvador unreservedly supported the work the Department had done thus far, in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and with full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States. He expressed his solidarity with Benin, the Central African Republic, Djibouti, Ecuador, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Vanuatu and Yemen, nations which were living through difficult times and needed the support of the international community.

6. In Central America, there had been satisfactory implementation during the period 1987-1991 of the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America (PEC), which had established a frame of reference, accepted by the Governments and the General Assembly, for focusing the attention of the international community on the measures required for reconciliation and peace in Central America. It had also facilitated the shaping of a consensus in the region for the consolidation of peace on a firm and lasting basis, had strengthened the institutions and forums for integration and the national agencies, and had contributed to the mobilization of external cooperation resources. Despite the advances made, it had been thought advisable to make changes in the PEC with a view to adjusting the existing strategy to the new dynamics of the process of integration in Central America, as a way of supporting peacemaking and the consolidation of peace, as well as the agricultural and livestock sector, the communications and energy infrastructure, social development, the environment, and stronger institutional mechanisms. What was needed was to channel any remaining resources into two new programme areas: the modernization of production, and manpower training. The PEC was an integral component in the consolidation of peace, democracy and development in Central America.

7. A concomitant of the Peace Agreement concluded at Mexico City in January 1992 was the urgent need for the political, social and economic reconstruction of El Salvador, where the level of violence in recent years had

(Mr. Castaneda, El Salvador)

reduced productivity and living standards, destroyed a large part of the economic and social infrastructure, and accelerated the degradation of the environment. El Salvador was going through a difficult transitional period given the limited funds available for the implementation of the Peace Agreement, and it was studying the possibility of requesting the General Assembly in the near future to decide to provide assistance to the country for its reconstruction and development.

8. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) praised the activities of UNDRO and underscored the need to increase both the resources allocated to it in the regular budget of the United Nations and the voluntary contributions under the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. That was the only way of preventing damage caused by natural disasters from frustrating the efforts to achieve sustainable and environmentally sound development. Benin proposed considering the possibility of incorporating in the regular budget of the United Nations the 40 per cent of the staff costs of UNDRO which used to be financed from voluntary contributions, in order to remove the element of uncertainty from such important work.

9. Benin was not completely satisfied with the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/337), because, even though the floods of July and August 1991 had caused loss of life, property damage, displacement of population and destruction of crops and livestock, the section on Benin made no mention of the provisions of paragraphs 6 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 45/230. Therefore, through the Committee, he requested that the Secretary-General submit a report on the implementation of that resolution in respect of Benin, in order to meet the need for reconstruction resulting from those disasters, particularly the floods of the past 10 years, and to implement specific prevention programmes. He wished to make it clear that Benin was not rejecting that section of the report, but rather asking that the provisions of the resolution be taken into consideration. His delegation reiterated its gratitude to the United Nations agencies and States which had given Benin support in the form of donations and contributions to deal with the emergencies, and hoped that they would continue to do so.

10. Mr. TOROU (Chad) said that, on 22 May 1992, in view of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in Chad and after consulting with opposition parties, unions and associations for the protection of human rights, the Head of State of Chad, had established an open Government which had formulated a programme of action. In order to promote economic development, a master plan for the year 2000 would be executed, focusing on privatization, liberalization of the economy and sectoral development, including taxation and austerity measures as well. With the support of France, the army was being restructured, and troop strength would be reduced from 50,000 to 25,000. Such measures, taken under difficult political conditions, had already caused social repercussions, but they could not be postponed without risking even harsher measures in the future.

11. Moreover, cotton, the second most important sector of the Chadian economy, had been affected by the unfavourable international economic environment. The restructuring of the cotton sector had reduced producer income, and factory closings had diminished the people's buying power. Given that difficult situation, he hoped that the international community would continue its efforts in accordance with the decisions taken at the round tables on assistance to Chad held in Geneva in 1982, 1985 and 1990. The schedule for sectoral consultations on the themes selected at the last round table had been changed, and his delegation would shortly be submitting a draft decision that would constitute the legal basis for those activities; he hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

12. Mrs. RAHOLINIRNA RADAFIARISOA (Madagascar) emphasized the need to increase efforts to achieve the objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Madagascar attached the utmost importance to the planning and execution of disaster preparedness programmes, which helped to mitigate the effects of disasters, and welcomed the decision adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development relating to management of human settlements in disaster-prone areas. Likewise, her delegation took note with interest of the proposal in the Tampere Declaration for the convening in 1993 of a conference to negotiate an intergovernmental convention on disaster communications.

13. In order to strengthen international mechanisms for disaster relief and mitigation, it was necessary to intensify the transfer of technology, experience and relevant information from donor countries to disaster-prone countries by facilitating access to publications and training and holding seminars and workshops. Madagascar supported the proposal made at the fourth meeting of Officials in Charge of National Emergency Relief Services to organize a workshop on the use of military assistance in relief operations. The international conferences held in 1992 and those scheduled for the near future had development as a common denominator; however, natural disasters could wipe out, overnight, the progress and development which had taken years to achieve. Consequently, any development strategy should include measures to reduce the vulnerability of those countries and strengthen their disaster-response capability. Madagascar was currently suffering from drought and a plague of locusts. Those scourges were having a considerable impact on the agricultural sector, the foundation of the national economy, and were threatening its food security. For that reason, her delegation was asking the international community to support the Government's efforts to confront those problems and to help strengthen its national capacity to manage disasters.

14. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that on 30 April 1991 the southern part of his country had been struck by the worst cyclone in living memory; some 140,000 people had been killed, millions had been left homeless and the infrastructure had been seriously damaged. UNDRO had played a laudable role

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

in making the international community aware of the needs arising as a result of that terrible disaster. The tragic experience of Bangladesh demonstrated the enormous importance of disaster preparedness and prevention in disaster-prone areas. It was essential to extend disaster prevention and preparedness measures in national and regional plans and to improve early warning and information systems. Therefore, Bangladesh welcomed the initiative to establish a central register of disaster management capacities.

15. The scarcity of funds for emergency relief operations was a key issue for the United Nations system and the international community. Given that the amount of resources required varied from one situation to another, it would be appropriate to review contingency plans on a continuing basis and to stockpile foodstuffs, medicines and other essential supplies in cases of disaster. His delegation also felt that all institutional restructuring in the area of emergency humanitarian assistance should aim at full utilization of the capacities already available and, in that context, underscored the importance of the UNDRO practice of presenting unified and consolidated appeals in emergencies.

16. Coordination of that type of assistance required close cooperation between the authorities of the affected countries and United Nations officials and other relief agencies. Given the need for timely information, it would be useful to establish close cooperation between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and donor Governments. His delegation welcomed the provisions of the Tampere Declaration identifying the need for communications and remote sensing in disaster management. The joint UNDRO/UNDP disaster management training programmes were of primary importance. It was beneficial to promote a local disaster mitigation "culture" with indigenous roots.

17. The number of persons at risk from disaster increased with population growth. Furthermore, since the least privileged people continued to move into zones of ever higher risk, disasters would continue to have increasingly serious consequences, unless prevention and preparedness measures were correspondingly increased. In other words, prevention and preparedness measures and the degree of vulnerability of countries exposed to natural disasters could not be dissociated from their general economic conditions or their level of development. In conclusion, during the current International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, there was an urgent need for a comprehensive plan of action involving all relevant United Nations bodies and utilizing the experience and comparative advantage of the entire system.

18. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that he was confident that the incorporation of UNDRO into the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would achieve the intended goal of enabling the United Nations system to respond quickly and in a coordinated fashion to natural and man-made disasters. UNDRO had been established in 1972 to coordinate the nascent international aid to western Africa and the Horn of

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

Africa, which at that time were undergoing great crises. At the same time, FAO had been instrumental in mitigating the effects of the great Sahelian drought and the Ethiopian crisis by organizing the first multidisciplinary, multidonor missions and beginning a fruitful partnership with the WFP. In 1975 the Global Informaton and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture had been established to keep FAO abreast of the food supply situation throughout the world.

19. Inasmuch as food emergencies had become increasingly complex and required more intensive coordination of international assistance, a new phase had begun in which UNDRO and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would play an essential role in the assessment, estimate and timely delivery of food and other relief supplies and services. There were plans to further develop disaster management training programmes, which would be of great importance in both the short and the long term, and to strengthen the United Nations International Emergency Network (UNIENET) as part of the Global Information and Early Warning System. UNIENET would thus provide continually updated information, facilitating the work of FAO. In summary, FAO was committed to active collaboration with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and support for the innovative measures begun by UNDRO.

20. Mr. AFONSO (Mozambique) called attention to the great efforts being deployed by the Government and the international community to alleviate the serious situation in Mozambique, and laid particular stress on the work of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, which had become ever more demanding and complex. The lack of means remained the most serious problem facing developing countries, which could not mitigate the consequences of natural disasters as long as the overall problem of economic development remained unsolved. In its 18 years of independence Mozambique had suffered different kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made. In the late 1970s the country had been hit by severe cyclones and devastating floods that destroyed thousands of tonnes of crops and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless. The cycle of floods had later been followed, in 1983 and 1984, by a prolonged drought. Moreover, in 1991 southern Africa had suffered the worst drought in living memory, Mozambique being the most affected in the entire region. The terrible consequences of such natural disasters had been aggravated by the scourge of war, which had caused more than a million people to leave the country, and rendered millions more homeless.

21. To tackle that very difficult situation the Government had created a National Executive Commission for the Emergency, which was working closely with the United Nations Special Coordinator for Emergency Relief Operations. With the intensification of the war in the late 1980s and early 1990s, operational activities, particularly in the more remote areas of the country, had had to overcome serious difficulties arising from the problem of security. None the less, the staff of the United Nations and other national and international organizations continued to perform their duties.

(Mr. Afonso, Mozambique)

22. On 4 October 1992, the President of the Republic of Mozambique and the RENAMO leader had signed the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, in Rome, with a view to the establishment of a lasting peace, the enhancement of democracy and the promotion true national reconciliation in Mozambique. Protocol VII of the Agreement referred to the holding of a conference of donor countries and organizations with the aim of obtaining financial support for the electoral process, emergency and rehabilitation programmes for refugees and displaced persons and support for the demobilized armed forces from both sides. The end of hostilities had been an important step and an opportunity to launch a comprehensive contingency plan to rescue the country from 16 years of untold suffering. The plan should be broken down into short-, medium- and long-term programmes consonant with a set of priorities in various sectors of social and economic life. The Government had created a national commission to assess ways and means of mobilizing international support for the national programme of economic and social rehabilitation.

23. Mr. MBINDA (Angola) reiterated his Government's profound gratitude for the international community's support for the restoration of peace in Angola. Angola had great natural resources and an adequate socio-economic infrastructure, but 16 years of war and destabilization had so deeply transformed its economic and social prospects that it needed the help of the international community. In 1987 and 1990 the Government had developed action plans designed to promote economic and financial recovery, but the continuation of the war had caused them to fail.

24. Despite the attitude taken by UNITA after the elections, peace and reconciliation were being consolidated, creating new hope; the Government had drawn up a programme that sought to rebuild key sectors of the economy and to encourage foreign investment, giving priority to reorganization of the rural areas, so that the country could become self-sufficient in food, and reintegration of refugees, displaced persons and demobilized military personnel. Unless support was forthcoming from the international community, it would not be possible to implement the programme; he therefore hoped that the draft resolution to be submitted on the subject would receive the Committee's full support.

25. Mr. Piriz Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

26. Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon) said that it had not been possible in 1992 to sustain the economic progress achieved in 1991. The Lebanese pound had suffered severe depreciation, resulting in hyperinflation and social unrest; so that coping with the economic and financial crisis had become the authorities' top priority. With scant resources, the Lebanese Government had to counteract the devastating effects of 16 years of conflict and invasion and tackle such major tasks as the rehabilitation of the basic infrastructure and public services, the reorganization of the administration and the health-care system, the planning and reconstruction of educational facilities and the resettlement of some 700,000 displaced persons.

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27. Despite the consequences of the war, however, Lebanon still had a dynamic economy and considerable growth potential. Given national security and a programme of economic stabilization, the country could once again become a major centre of growth in the Middle East. It was to be hoped that the Arab and International Fund for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon, which would help to revitalize the Lebanese economy, would be established in the near future. It was regrettable that there had been so little financial support for the country's reconstruction efforts, given that billions of dollars had poured into Lebanon in preceding years to feed the fires of destruction there.

28. The Government and people of Lebanon appreciated the relief and assistance efforts undertaken by the international community, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, and hoped that assistance would also be provided for the country's rehabilitation and reconstruction. He welcomed the nomination of the Resident Coordinator for Lebanon, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/173, and expressed the hope that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would soon be in a position to provide assistance. The revitalization of Lebanon's economy was an excellent investment in the future of the region, since Lebanon had played an important role in the modernization and development of that part of the world and still possessed the necessary dynamism and ambition to resume its constructive role.

29. Miss ULLOA (Ecuador) said that, in view of the natural disasters which the world was experiencing, her delegation supported the establishment of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, but believed that that initiative must not affect resources earmarked for development cooperation. The activities of UNDRO to alleviate the situation of disaster survivors and evacuees were to be commended.

30. In recent years, Ecuador had suffered various natural disasters, such as the El Niño phenomenon in 1982-1983 and the earthquake of March 1987. It had sought the cooperation of UNDRO, which had established a centre to mitigate the effects of natural diasters. In January 1987, UNDP, under the auspices of the United States Office of Diaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and with coordination and advice provided by UNDRO, had launched the Diaster Prevention and Preparedness Programmes in Ecuador and neighbouring countries, which studied the possible effects of diasters and prepared emergency plans to protect the population. Because of its mountainous and volcanic topography and its offshore climatic conditions (the warm El Niño current and the cold Humboldt current), Ecuador was subject to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and flooding. In anticipation of new natural diasters, the project included the micro-zone mapping of Guayaquil, Ecuador's most populous city, for use in urban planning. In Quito, the capital, measures were being taken to protect the population against landslides. Emergency plans were to be drawn up for various parts of the country, providing for evacuation from the affected zones and training of the authorities, students and the public for such

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(Miss Ulloa, Ecuador)

eventualities. Given the scale and complexity of the project, the country could not implement it successfully on its own, and thus needed UNDP coordination as well as the services of experts and economic resources.

31. Miss Diop (Senegal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

32. Mr. TEFERRA (Ethiopia) said that the humanitarian situation around the world was a source of serious concern, owing to natural disasters and internecine conflicts. The Horn of Africa subregion continued to be the most seriously affected, as could be seen from the Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal for the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa. In recognition of that situation, the leaders of the subregion had met at Addis Ababa in April 1992 and adopted a common strategy for dealing with the humanitarian situation there. They had also adopted a declaration and a programme of action emphasizing the importance of the timely delivery of assistance, and had expressed their commitment to the observance and promotion of humanitarian norms and principles; they had called for the establishment of corridors of safety in order to reconcile the principle of sovereignty with the need to guarantee the delivery of relief supplies and had drawn the attention of the international community to the problems of displaced persons and refugees and to the need to offer humanitarian assistance along with long-term development assistance.

33. At the same meeting, they had also considered the most serious humanitarian challenge facing the Horn of Africa, namely the situation in Somalia, together with its impact on the countries bordering Somalia. A high-level standing committee on Somalia had been set up to coordinate the subregion's response to the crisis in that country and to complement regional and international efforts to deal with the situation. Another positive development was the coordination meeting on Somalia held in October 1992 at Geneva, at which a 100-day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian assistance had been approved. A follow-up conference was to be held at Addis Ababa on 30 November and 1 December 1992, and would be attended by donors, aid agencies, concerned countries as well as relevant Somali groupings. He reiterated Ethiopia's readiness to contribute to the success of that conference and to the entire humanitarian effort on behalf of Somalia.

34. The civil war in Ethiopia, which had lasted 30 years and had come to an end in 1991 with the overthrow of the military dictatorship, had left a legacy of ruin, poverty, famine, unemployment and disease. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia, which had taken control more than a year earlier, had inherited those problems, but intended to foster the establishment of a pluralist political system under which peace and stability could be maintained. The Government was faced with the problems generated by the demobilization of the army and the police force of the previous regime, the existence of millions of displaced persons as a result of the civil war, and the effects of drought and famine, problems exacerbated by the massive influx into Ethiopia of over 1 million refugees, most of them from Somalia. Ethiopia

was grateful for the assistance which the international community had provided to date, and looked forward to greater assistance in the future.

35. Mr. CATARINO (Portugal) said that his country was following the evolution of the situation in Mozambique with great interest and supported the activities that the United Nations was carrying out to complement the action already taken by the Government of Mozambique in the areas of food aid, health and nutrition, water supply and sanitation, agricultural production and refugees. Portugal was deeply concerned about the serious effects of the drought in southern Africa and was doing its utmost to assist the people of Mozambique. In 1991 it had provided emergency assistance worth $10 million to Mozambique. The General Peace Agreement for Mozambique signed in Rome in 1992 after long and complex negotiations had opened up new prospects for solving the political conflict, thus permitting the United Nations system to deliver relief assistance.

36. Portugal was also following developments in Angola with interest; it was to be hoped that the appropriate political conditions would soon prevail and lead to the economic and social rehabilitation of the country. The international community could play an important role in that respect by providing the necessary material, technical and financial support through the organizations of the United Nations system. Portugal hoped that a date could be set for the convening of a round-table donor conference for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Angola in cooperation with UNDP, the African Development Bank, the Portuguese Government and other interested countries. He also praised the efforts of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) and of the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Angola. For its part, Portugal was doing its utmost to cooperate with Angola in various social and economic areas; in 1991, its contribution to Angola's rehabilitation had totalled more than $18 million.

37. Mr. BULL (Liberia) reiterated the gratitude of the people and Government of Liberia to donors, government and non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system for their continuing assistance to his country not only in meeting its critical humanitarian needs but also in attaining its development objectives. However, logistical and security problems continued to hamper relief operations and to hobble the transition to reconstruction and development.

38. At the previous session, his delegation had told the Committee it was confident that the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro agreement of 30 October 1991 would facilitate the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Liberia through the disarmament, demobilization and cantonment of the combatants in camps, which would permit the holding of democratic elections within six months. However, in view of the non-compliance with the terms of the agreement by the National Patriotic Front, the Committee of Five of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had met at Geneva in April 1992 and had called for the immediate implementation of the agreement.

(Mr. Bull, Liberia)

When the decisions adopted at that meeting were not implemented, the ECOWAS Assembly of Heads of State and Government had, at its July 1992 meeting, decided to request the Security Council to support the application of sanctions against any of the parties that did not comply with the agreement within 30 days. The Chairman of ECOWAS had been obliged to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly on 19 October 1992 which had reaffirmed the decisions adopted in July and had decided that if the Yamoussoukro agreement was not implemented within a period of two weeks, the Security Council would be formally requested to impose comprehensive sanctions that would be binding on the States members of the international community. On the eve of that meeting, the National Patriotic Front had launched a large-scale attack on Monrovia. Fighting was still going on in the capital, causing suffering and death among civilians. As a result of that serious situation, it had been announced that the ECOWAS Ministers for Foreign Affairs would meet shortly with the Security Council to consider the situation in Liberia. It was unfortunate that people had to resort to armed force in order to assume power. The Liberian people wished to be allowed to exercise its right to elect its leaders through free and fair elections.

39. As a result of those unexpected events, Liberia urgently needed humanitarian assistance to mitigate the suffering of the population. He therefore appealed to the international community to respond generously to that emergency situation and to support the programmes described in the Secretary-General's report on Liberia.

40. Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation flatly rejected all the accusations made at the previous meeting by the representative of the United States of America, who had inexplicably placed the legitimate Government of the Sudan on an equal footing with the rebel forces operating in its territory that had gone to the extreme of kidnapping thousands of Sudanese children in order to force them to fight in their bands. He stressed in particular that no ethnic cleansing was practised in his country and explained that the resettlement efforts considered arbitrary by the United States delegation were actually transfers of people living in inhospitable regions to more habitable areas, and that the alleged killing of an individual for which the Sudanese authorities had been blamed was nothing more than the execution of a prisoner in conformity with his country's penal legislation after due process had been observed and the criminal had confessed. Moreover, the representative of the United States had deliberately overlooked and, of course, failed to condemn the killing by rebels of four United Nations staff members in southern Sudan. The freedom of movement of those seeking to study the situation objectively was not restricted in the Sudan, as the Ambassador of the United States and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator could attest.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
27th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 4 November 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Chairman)	(Uruguay)

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AGENDA ITEM 80: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

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Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.27
13 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

92-57483 6227S (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 80: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/120, A/47/225-S/23998, A/47/312-S/24238, A/47/351-S/24357, A/47/391, A/47/449, A/47/466 and A/47/564)

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (*continued*) (A/47/388 and A/47/393)

1. Mr. CUTAJAR (Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change) said that the main recommendation in the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (A/47/466) was that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee should remain as a universal forum for preparatory work for the first session of the Conference of the Parties. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would lay the groundwork for the decisions to be taken by the Conference of the Parties, monitor the functioning of the interim arrangements and promote a coherent approach to the implementation of the Convention. It would have appropriate linkage with the Commission on Sustainable Development. Other recommendations concerned the continued provision of secretariat support and the extension of extrabudgetary funding up to and including the first session of the Conference of the Parties.

2. He was pleased to announce that Fiji had been the 158th country to sign the Convention, and that the Marshall Islands and the United States of America had been the third and fourth countries to ratify it.

3. The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would be held at Geneva from 7 to 10 December 1992. Inquiries about the possibility of holding the session in New York had elicited the response that conference services could not be guaranteed. An urgent decision on that matter must be taken in order to ensure the usual funding arrangements for participation in the session; those arrangements were currently under way.

4. In his report, the Secretary-General identified two keys to the success of the future work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee. The first involved the process for communicating and reviewing information related to implementation. The other was the provision of adequate financial and technological resources to enable developing country parties to play their part in responding to climate change; that would call for a well-functioning and well-funded financial mechanism of the Convention.

5. With regard to the future work of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, which would function as the interim secretariat for the Convention, he noted that substantive support for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would need to evolve with that Committee's work programme. The secretariat could contribute to the collaborative effort to support the ratification and implementation efforts of

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(Mr. Cutajar)

any countries that requested such support. In preparation for its future work programme, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was planning to issue, jointly with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Information Unit on Climate Change, a newsletter on climate change, and it was considering a pilot programme of information/training workshops.

6. The ability of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Committee to undertake such projects would depend on the number and skill of available staff, as well as the provision of non-staff resources. Extrabudgetary funding had been and would continue to be a welcome supplement. The Committee appreciated the loans of staff from United Nations bodies and the bilateral funding of posts; however, in order to ensure universality, the bulk of its funding should continue to come from the regular budget.

7. Mr. RIPERT (Chairman, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change) said that, in order for the Framework Convention on Climate Change to enter into force, it must be ratified by at least 50 countries. So far, only four Member States - three small island States and one very large country - had ratified the Convention.

8. It was necessary to establish institutional procedures and machinery for the proper functioning of the first session of the Conference of the Parties. The Conference should not be a negotiating body, and it should have the authority to take decisions on the implementation of the Convention. In order to ensure that the Conference was operational from the very beginning, the General Assembly should give the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee a mandate to continue its work in that area.

9. There was a need for an in-depth analysis of the technological means by which the international community could take measures to reduce the greenhouse effect or to adapt to it. That concern was reflected in the agenda of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, whose next session would be held at Harare at the beginning of December 1992. That session had been scheduled just before the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, and he hoped that there would be good linkage between the scientific and technical work of the Panel and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

10. The Panel should adopt structures that would enable it to respond more adequately to the needs of the international community. The Panel's chairman had taken steps to ensure that the largest number of countries, in particular the developing countries, were able to participate in its work. The results of the Panel's work should be subjected to a critical assessment of their validity. Efforts should be made to ensure that the Conference of the Parties had before it the most recent, complete and reliable information on climate change at its first session.

(Mr. Ripert)

11. The Framework Convention on Climate Change provided that the Global Environment Facility of UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank should serve as the interim financial mechanism of the Convention. To that end, the Facility should modify its structure and composition in order to conform to the requirements of the Convention. There was a need for a systematic exchange of information between the Facility and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee during the interim period. The question of the mobilization of resources for the years to come would be on the 1993 agenda of the Global Environment Facility, which had resources until the end of 1993. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the Global Environment Facility could work together to ensure that resources were available when the Convention entered into force in 1994 or 1995.

12. While there was also a need for a small well-equipped secretariat to serve as the focal point for the implementation of the Convention, the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee could not be the sole body responsible for such a daunting task, which would require the mobilization of a great deal of technical expertise. International agencies, in particular UNEP and WMO, as well as other organizations, should provide support to the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in order to enable it to carry out its tasks efficiently. In particular, the secretariat should facilitate the exchange of objective information among all Member States.

13. Mr. OSSA (Director, Development Policy and Analysis Division, Department of Economic and Social Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on "Structural change in the world economy: implications for energy use and air emissions" (A/47/388), said that it provided estimates of the growth of global and regional GDP, energy use and air emissions of carbon, sulphur and nitrogen oxides up to the year 2020. Those estimates were determined by projected trends and relationships, within and among regions, in the composition of investment, foreign trade and consumption, and by the assumed rate of technology diffusion in developed and developing regions. Changes in regional and global air emissions were thus traced to changes in technology and the structure of production. Particular attention was paid to power generation, transportation and the energy-intensive industries.

14. Under the baseline scenario, per capita GDP would grow at an annual rate of about 1.2 per cent for the world as a whole between 1990 and 2020, and global air emissions of carbon from combustion of fossil fuels would reach about 9.5 billion metric tons per year in 2020. With higher growth of per capita GDP - around 1.7 per cent annually - carbon emissions would be about 11.2 billion metric tons annually in 2020.

15. The policy implications of the environmental and economic problems associated with global climate change depended on the extent to which their root causes could be addressed in the longer term. For instance, it was expected that many wasteful practices would gradually be eliminated. While

(Mr. Ossa)

the projections did not assume the achievement of any major technological breakthroughs, or the introduction of strong policy measures such as significant tax increases on fossil fuels or on carbon emissions, they did assume a significant diffusion of existing efficient technologies from the most advanced to the middle- and low-income regions, and of technologies to limit emissions of sulphur dioxide and the nitrogen oxides.

16. The report could be seen as complementary to the work of IPCC. IPCC had focused mainly on scientific questions related to the effects of greenhouse gases on the climate and of climate change on the economy, rather than on questions related to long-term projections of economic growth and development and the resultant emissions of greenhouse gases. The analysis before the Committee indicated that world energy use and related emissions of carbon dioxide were likely to be considerably higher in the year 2020. Indeed, under the high growth scenario, both carbon dioxides and nitrogen oxides would virtually double over the next 30 years.

17. The rational approach would be to emphasize research, so as to achieve more rapid progress in energy and materials conservation and in the use of environmentally benign sources; however, policies were also crucial. He called for further measures, including taxation, to slow increases in energy use, particularly in developed countries, and for more rapid diffusion of technological improvements, inter alia, by facilitating developing countries' access to energy-saving technologies.

18. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

19. Mr. BRANNER (United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office) said that for the poor arid or semi-arid countries, the interdependence of environmental and development problems was a harsh day-to-day reality. Fluctuations in climate, soil degradation and desertification had long been the main stumbling blocks to those countries' development efforts. The Rio Conference had provided a new opportunity for the international community to assign high priority to the consideration of those problems. Africa had played a crucial role in that context. Intensive preparatory work by Governments had been supported by regional and subregional as well as by international organizations.

20. The report before the Committee (A/47/393) attempted to highlight the resources and arrangements necessary to implement the recommendations contained in chapter 12 of Agenda 21. A number of measures were needed to follow up action to combat drought and desertification. To begin with, chapter 12 of Agenda 21 was a frame of reference resulting from a long process of negotiation by the entire international community. The resources needed to implement the agreed provisions must now be mobilized as a matter of urgency. In particular, efforts to draft and adopt a convention on desertification must not be allowed to stand in the way of follow-up to and implementation of the programmes on desertification and drought.

(Mr. Branner)

21. Secondly, adoption of chapter 12 of Agenda 21 would be meaningful only if it was followed by an increase in the resources allocated to solving those problems. However, in the current economic and political climate, an increase in traditional bilateral and multilateral contributions would not be sufficient to cover even basic needs. Such contributions must thus be supplemented by new resources and innovative financial modalities. The regional banks might play a very important role in financing sustainable development programmes in their respective regions. A very promising example might emerge from the current discussions between the African Development Bank and UNSO aimed at identifying allocations specifically earmarked for activities to combat desertification.

22. Thirdly, special mention must be made of the Global Environment Facility, and of the calls made in the context of the Rio Conference to include the question of desertification as a fifth priority area of the Facility. A meeting of experts, organized by UNDP/UNSO in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank had been held from 28 to 30 October 1992, in order to make a technical and scientific contribution to consideration of the question of desertification as a global phenomenon.

23. Fourthly, in the context of operationalization of the concept of sustainable development, it was clear that the various programmes designed to set up strategic frameworks for the planning and coordination of activities concerning natural resource management must be harmonized. Taking certain countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region as an example, several initiatives had been launched in that field: plans of action to combat desertification, national action plans for the environment, tropical forest action plans, and national conservation strategies. Two years previously, UNSO had initiated meetings of the organizations concerned to enable those various approaches to be harmonized. Recently, it had been decided to pursue that effort, and another harmonization meeting was scheduled later in November 1992. That example might be taken up and extended to the other regions in the context of the establishment of sustainable development frameworks.

24. More generally, harmonization of operational activities in the sphere of natural resource management was indispensable. In that context, it would be useful to review the role and functions of existing inter-agency mechanisms to deal with questions relating to drought and desertification, such as the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification (IAWGD), with a view to increasing their effectiveness. Recent initiatives by UNDP, particularly the Capacity 21 programme and the sustainable development networks should also contribute greatly to implementation of Agenda 21, and of its chapter 12 in particular.

25. Lastly, at regional level, the organizations dealing with problems relating to drought and desertification must receive further political and financial support from their member States, and also from the international community, to enable them to work effectively.

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(Mr. Branner)

26. The drafting and adoption of a convention on desertification would be a very useful means of promoting international cooperation and harmonizing national, regional and international efforts. It might also serve as a frame of reference for a broader mobilization and programming of national and international efforts. In view of the June 1994 deadline set for completion of drafting of the convention, and of the complexity of the question, the negotiating process should be initiated as soon as possible, to enable the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to hold its first session in the first part of 1993.

27. Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that an immediate 60 per cent reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and CFCs were needed if concentrations were to stabilize at current levels. Unfortunately, however, while acknowledging that responsibility for containing, reducing and eliminating damage caused to the environment must be borne mainly by those countries causing it, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change included no legally binding targets to stabilize or reduce such emissions by the year 2000. Accordingly the situation would continue to deteriorate.

28. In spite of their economic vulnerability, the developing countries had agreed to shoulder commitments under the Framework Convention. But implementation of those commitments, many of which required special expertise not available to all developing countries, was inextricably linked to commitments by developed countries. Transfer of technology on preferential and concessional terms was thus an essential prerequisite to implementation of the Convention.

29. Despite their good intentions, the developing countries would find it difficult to fulfil their commitments unless new and additional resources were made available. The Global Environment Facility had been identified as the interim mechanism for financing implementation of the Convention, although the duration of that arrangement had not been specified. However, the Facility was just one of a number of mechanisms and sources of financing. The Group of 77 attached great importance to restructuring the Facility to take account of the principles of democratic governance and transparency in decision-making and operations. The Facility should report directly to the Conference of the Parties, thereby ensuring effective monitoring of the financing made available for implementation of the Convention.

30. A strong political commitment was required, not only to implement the Convention, but also to build upon it so as to ensure a healthy environment for future generations. However, future commitments must not jeopardize the development of developing countries. The Convention recognized that emissions from developing countries would increase as those countries sought to meet their social and development needs. Meanwhile, the developed countries must assume responsibility for the damage they had caused to the climate.

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(Mr. Zaman, Pakistan)

31. Desertification and drought were phenomena that chiefly affected countries of the developing world. The Group of 77 believed that the intergovernmental negotiating committee to draft an international convention on desertification should be set up during the current session of the General Assembly.

32. Mr. CAMERON (Australia) said that the speed with which agreement had been reached on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had been a remarkable demonstration of the participants' will to succeed. While the Convention provided only a preliminary framework for action, it was nevertheless an important first step.

33. Australia had already put in place a range of activities that would assist it in meeting convention obligations in areas such as scientific research and cooperation, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and enhancement of sinks, adaptation and community information programmes. It was also developing a national greenhouse response strategy, which would provide a mechanism for implementing many of the commitments under the Convention.

34. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was to be congratulated on the results achieved to date. However, much work remained to be done to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties. His delegation thus called upon the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the Committee could continue to hold sessions until the entry into force of the Convention. It supported the extension of the arrangements for secretariat support to the Committee until such time as the Conference of the Parties designated a permanent secretariat for the Convention.

35. Australia also attached high priority to arresting and reversing desertification, and supported the efforts made by the international community to deal with that issue. Australia had considerable expertise in dryland farming and sustainable resource management of arid lands, which it hoped to contribute to the process. It supported the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for a convention on desertification, and would participate actively in the development of such a convention. The convention must contain measures to address the underlying causes of desertification, so that vulnerable arid and semi-arid lands could be put to productive use over the long term.

36. Mr. MAHMOUD (Mauritania), speaking on behalf of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and his own country, said that those delegations looked forward to the prompt entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and to the integrated, comprehensive and effective implementation of its provisions. An adequate, transparent and universal financial mechanism was needed to provide developing countries with new financial resources and to ensure transfer of technology on a non-commercial basis. They endorsed the interim arrangements outlined in the Convention pending the latter's entry into force.

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(Mr. Mahmoud, Mauritania)

37. Those delegations were deeply gratified by the international consensus calling for the elaboration of an international convention on desertification. The consensus amply demonstrated the urgency of adopting appropriate measures to combat desertification, as well as the global nature of a phenomenon whose impact was both economic and ecological in scope.

38. Although rapid and substantial intervention by the international community had made it possible to avert a greater tragedy in some areas, essential needs remained to be met; inadequate rainfall remained a serious problem throughout much of Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan and southern Africa.

39. The inexorable advance of the desert was one of the greatest challenges facing the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union. He underscored the damage wrought, inter alia, by desert encroachment, inadequate rainfall, the spread of sand dunes and accelerated soil erosion, all of which had a devastating impact on watercourses and groundwater supplies and undermined the economic base of the affected countries. Desertification also was wreaking havoc on the Atlantic and Mediterranean shores of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union. The Mediterranean Sea, already threatened by pollution from the dumping of industrial and other wastes, should be permanently protected.

40. The Arab Maghreb Union had adopted a number of measures to combat drought and desertification, a charter on the environment and a drinking-water supply plan. The Union also planned to convene a conference to establish environmental protection priorities. Popular support for such measures also was being encouraged. He reiterated the offer by the delegation of Morocco at UNCED to host a high-level meeting on problems relating to water resources, particularly in Africa.

41. Severe economic difficulties, inadequate external financial resources and insufficient technological support had prevented the countries affected by desertification and drought from implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification adopted in 1977. He therefore welcomed the priority attached to desertification at the Rio Conference and expressed the hope that the General Assembly would establish the proposed intergovernmental negotiating committee to elaborate an international convention on desertification before June 1994. Financing should be provided from the regular budget of the United Nations and the Committee should be given adequate secretariat support. On behalf of the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union, Algeria had offered to host the bureau of the proposed intergovernmental negotiating committee once it had been established. The delegations on whose behalf he was speaking pledged their readiness to join in the collective effort to discharge the responsibilities outlined at Rio.

42. Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

43. Mrs. DOWDESWELL (Canada) said that the global challenges of climate change and desertification demanded prompt action. The Framework Convention was the first truly global sustainable development instrument. It was action-oriented and would evolve and be strengthened as knowledge improved and a global community of interests solidified.

44. The early signs of broad political and public support for the Convention were heartening. However, much remained to be done. The interim arrangements recommended by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would prove of fundamental importance in maintaining the desired momentum in preparation for the first session of the Conference of the Parties, which her delegation sincerely hoped could be held in 1994. The resolution on the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to be adopted by the General Assembly should set the stage for a fruitful process.

45. Her own country planned to ratify the Convention before the end of 1992 and was moving swiftly to carry out its own agenda on climate change. That effort included the preparation of its first national report by June 1993, cooperation with several developing countries on capacity-building, assistance in the development of a scientific work programme for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in support of the Convention and advancement of cooperation on the comprehensive approach to emissions limitation.

46. Turning to the issue of desertification, another global problem that derived primarily from unsustainable human activities, she said that Canada itself was not immune to the effects of desertification, which were estimated to cost it millions annually in its Prairie provinces. That was of course nothing in comparison to the toll in Asian and, in particular, African countries, which should receive the highest priority. Her country had always been a major supporter of the fight against desertification in Africa through its development assistance programme and, recognizing the pressing need for coordinated action to combat the phenomenon world wide, it strongly supported the international consensus to elaborate a convention on desertification by 1994.

47. It was essential that the negotiations proceed on the basis of the best scientific - including the social sciences such as economics - and technical advice available. That must not, however, be used as an argument for delay. A mechanism to ensure the provision of expert advice on desertification should be developed immediately.

48. While national action would remain the primary determinant of success, it must be undertaken and coordinated within a reinforcing international framework in which the broadest possible participation by the North and the South was assured. The support of citizens', women's and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged.

49. The negotiating environment for the desertification convention required the strong leadership of an active chairman and bureau, the sustained energy

(Mrs. Dowdeswell, Canada)

of an effective secretariat and the full support of all relevant United Nations agencies and other international bodies. It would be particularly important to identify innovative and equitable negotiation mechanisms that would balance the need for the participation of all with the reality that fruitful negotiation among 150 sovereign States was exceedingly difficult. The efforts of the Secretary-General to adapt the United Nations to that new global reality should assist in meeting that challenge.

50. Mrs. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that her delegation looked forward to the adoption of a resolution calling for the initiation of the intergovernmental negotiating process to elaborate the convention to combat desertification.

51. Her Government planned to move swiftly towards ratification of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Although global action was needed to stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the industrialized countries had a special responsibility to move ahead with national measures such as drastic reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, preservation and restoration of woodlands, a general halt in the production of chlorofluorocarbons by 1995 at the latest, and restrictions on the global increase in nitrogen oxide and methane emissions. She also underscored the importance of adequate action at the regional level, and welcomed the tax proposed by the Commission of the European Communities to curb carbon dioxide emissions and enhance the efficient use of energy.

52. In the coming years it would be important to overcome the obstacles that had stood in the way of a stronger Framework Convention on Climate Change. The list in article 4, paragraph 8, of the Convention of categories of countries whose specific needs and concerns were recognized, as well as the problems they faced, should guide efforts to protect the global climate for present and future generations.

53. Mr. MALLYA (United Republic of Tanzania) welcomed the decision adopted at Rio, calling for an international convention on desertification. Desertification had four primary causes: overcultivation, overgrazing, deforestation and poor irrigation practices, all of which were influenced by population changes, climatic variations and changing social and economic conditions. In his country, as in most developing countries, environmental degradation and poverty went hand in hand. Accordingly, environmental protection programmes would succeed only if they were integrated in socio-economic development programmes designed to meet particular regional and country requirements. His delegation hoped that the negotiating process would result in a programme which addressed the socio-economic dimension of environmental degradation. Naturally, such programmes must encompass poverty eradication and the promotion of an alternative livelihood in areas prone to drought and desertification.

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(Mr. Kallya, United Republic of Tanzania)

54. Also, an integrated approach was needed to the planning and management of land resources in view of the interrelationship between social systems and those resources. Successful anti-desertification programmes must be integrated into national development plans, tropical forest action plans, national conservation strategies and national environmental action plans. In view of the transboundary and global nature of desertification, a multisectoral and multidimensional approach was needed. The proposed convention would help promote regional integration and cooperation and the harmonization of national, regional and international efforts.

55. The funds allocated to combat drought and desertification had been insufficient. As a result, eastern and southern Africa currently were in the grip of the worst drought since the beginning of the century. The Global Environment Facility could not yet cover the full range of the relevant Agenda 21 provisions, and it should be expanded to accommodate drought and desertification programmes. UNDP's Capacity 21 also could be expanded to support such programmes. Chapters 33 and 34 of Agenda 21 on financial resources and mechanisms and the transfer of environmentally sound technology and capacity-building should be fully implemented.

56. He hoped that the Secretary-General would establish an ad hoc secretariat and multidisciplinary expert group as soon as possible - perhaps as early as January 1993 - to help the intergovernmental negotiating committee on desertification begin its work. He also urged all States to organize national, subregional and regional activities to support the negotiation process by involving the scientific and industrial communities, trade unions, relevant non-governmental organizations and other interested groups. His delegation would work closely with the proposed intergovernmental negotiating committee to encourage the conclusion of the convention in 1994.

57. Mr. WISIBONO (Indonesia) said that the substantial support demonstrated thus far for the Framework Convention on Climate Change underscored the growing awareness of the international community of the importance of prompt and effective action to deal with global warming. However, the fact that progress had been made did not mean that the international community could be complacent. The ultimate objective of stabilizing the atmospheric build-up of greenhouse gases at safe levels was not yet assured. Success would depend on such factors as the ability to progress on the basis of new scientific findings and the adequate provision of financing and access to technology.

58. His Government had initiated the ratification process in accordance with its constitutional procedures and hoped that other countries would follow suit, in order to facilitate the early entry into force of the Convention. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Government of Germany had offered to host the first session of the Conference of the Parties.

59. Prior to the Convention's entry into force, the interim preparatory process should establish the means to communicate information from the developed countries and to develop a financial mechanism. His delegation was

(Mr. Wisibono, Indonesia)

pleased that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would continue to operate during the interim period. The question of financial and technological resources would gain increased importance once the Convention entered into force, and those issues should be taken seriously into consideration during the interim phase.

60. Mr. SIEBER (Observer for Switzerland) said that until the Framework Convention on Climate Change came into force, the Negotiating Committee should pursue its work in order to prepare a first session of the Conference of the Parties that was both fruitful and successful. One of the foremost priorities in that regard would be to activate the communication of information mechanism which had a central role in the control of compliance with the provisions of the Convention. The interim programme of work must also further address the issues related to financial commitments. In that respect, it was essential that developing countries and countries whose economies were in transition be fully associated in the work.

61. With regard to financial support, the United Nations budget would have to earmark resources to cover the interim period. Switzerland was ready to contribute substantial resources by way of voluntary funds in order to enable the secretariat to function effectively and to ensure the full participation of developing countries and countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the secretariat's work during the interim period. It would also be crucial for negotiators to have a permanent link to scientific, technical and economic information sources and the interim secretariat should play an important role in that regard.

62. The issue of the limitation of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases must also become an integral part of the interim work programme. In his delegation's view, specific protocols, particularly on carbon dioxide or energy, should be elaborated rapidly. Since the Second World Climate Conference held in Geneva two years previously, Switzerland had been committed to working towards concrete action by industrialized countries on such emissions and it remained firmly convinced that the stabilization of such emissions by the year 2000 was both indispensable and feasible.

63. His country together with Austria and Liechtenstein had made a joint statement on signing the Framework Convention on Climate Change underscoring the "importance of the work to be carried out during the interim period pending entry into force of the Convention" and the need to take "early decisions on the preparation of protocols to the Convention on specific issues".

64. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that efforts to combat drought and desertification had so far yielded only limited results because of the lack of an integrated sustainable development approach and the absence of political will and required resources. FAO had made a substantial contribution to the United Nations Conference on

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

Environment and Development, and the main guiding principles with respect to the general approach to and strategies for combating drought and desertification had now been identified.

65. The success of efforts to combat drought and desertification would depend largely on the adoption of rural development policies and the provision of sufficient financial means to implement them. It was heartening to note that the Conference had launched a process of negotiation on an international convention on desertification. FAO would support the efforts of the negotiating committee to the fullest extent of its possibilities. At the same time it very much hoped that the discussions on an international convention on desertification would not divert attention from the urgent need for specific action in the field to provide for the food security of the populations concerned.

66. Turning to agenda item 80, he noted that global climate considerations could not be separated from the issue of sustainable development. FAO regarded climate as one of the major natural resources; consequently, climate resources, particularly the regional and temporal distribution of rainfall and its utilization, received substantial attention.

67. Current FAO activities which were of direct relevance to the protection of the global climate included studies to improve understanding of climate-agriculture systems, the net reduction of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and emissions through promotion of afforestation and alternative sources of energy and the reduction of agricultural sources of greenhouse gases.

68. With a view to improving the understanding of climate-related phenomena, his organization's activities addressed a range of subjects. Thus, for example, it cooperated with the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in particular with regard to agriculture and forestry as driving forces of climate change, and the impact of such change on agro-ecosystems. Also, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, it was executing through the Environmental Change Unit of Oxford University, a three-year impact study on human population supporting capacities which would map shifts in agro-ecological potential at the global and regional level in response to climatic changes as projected from high-resolution general circulation models.

69. FAO also aimed at reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and emissions, promoting afforestation and reforestation programmes as one of the potential sinks of atmospheric carbon and collecting valuable baseline information for estimating the global carbon contribution from biomass burning and the response of forests to stress and climate change. FAO was actively promoting research into biofuels as an alternative and sustainable substitute for fossil fuels; collaborating with agricultural research institutes to reduce methane and nitrous oxide emissions from flooded rice fields and

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offering support to member Governments in the development and demonstration of strategies for the introduction of energy-efficient and environmentally friendly systems of animal husbandry.

70. Mr. IBRAHIM (Djibouti) said that over 40 million people were currently suffering from famine caused by Africa's worst drought since the beginning of the century. Although no effort had been spared in Africa to implement the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and although Africa had received an estimated $490 million in assistance in 1986 (about 3.5 per cent of the total of official development assistance it had received that year) in connection with desertification and drought control, that was still not enough to deal with the problem. His delegation endorsed the suggestion in paragraph 36 of the Secretary-General's report (A/47/393) that the General Assembly consider requesting that a certain percentage of the expected increase in ODA be earmarked for desertification activities. If that were done it would be a real sign of the international community's determination to implement the Rio commitment to genuinely sustainable development for all.

71. With respect to implementing the decisions relating to the financing required for Agenda 21, the implementation of the programmes recommended in chapter 12 would require new and additional resources on a concessional basis. The costs of the measures envisaged would amount to $6.73 billion each year between 1993 and the year 2000. Needless to say, developing countries, particularly the least developed ones already affected by such phenomena, could not afford that sum even if, as proposed in Rio, 50 per cent of the programmes and activities of Agenda 21 were to be covered by new and additional financial resources. His delegation very much regretted that no agreement had been reached on the African proposal to identify a separate financing mechanism for drought and desertification.

72. Consequently, it was imperative for the international community to shoulder its specific financing commitments to help implement chapter 12 and other chapters closely connected with the question at the current session of the General Assembly, in particular for countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region that were the most affected.

73. One of the channels for funding programmes under chapter 12 at the regional level might be to establish a new window at the African Development Bank (ADB) intended exclusively for desertification and drought as well as the protection and management of natural resources. His delegation also welcomed the efforts made by the Director of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and ADB to see to it that the Global Environment Facility identified desertification and drought as its fifth priority area and urged the international community to support those efforts.

74. Although his delegation greatly welcomed the decision taken by the Rio Conference to draft an international convention to combat desertification, such a convention should be regarded as a substitute for immediate action in keeping with the decisions of the Rio Conference.

(Mr. Ibrahim, Djibouti)

75. Finally he paid tribute to the work done and the decisive role played by UNSO in collaboration with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and IGADD and commended the valuable assistance they had given to African delegations during the preparatory phase of the negotiations on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

76. Mr. SINGH (India) said that the problem of climate change was particularly pressing for India, which faced the prospect of severe adverse effects on agriculture and flooding of large areas of coastline and island territories. Although the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions originated in the developed countries, some people had argued that because every country emitted at least some carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, all countries bore responsibility for corrective actions. As the language of the convention stated explicitly, however, because global warming was, in fact, a result of excessive emissions, responsibility for corrective actions to combat it rested primarily with the countries responsible for excessive levels of per capita emissions. At the same time, given sufficient resources, developing countries would participate actively in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

77. It was also recognized that the process of development would inevitably lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries and that the existing disparity in levels of per capita energy consumption between developed and developing countries would have to be redressed over time. As soon as their per capita emissions reached the agreed common ceiling, the developing countries would have to accept obligations similar to those of the developed countries. That was his Government's understanding of the principle of common, yet differentiated responsibility.

78. The participation of developing countries in world-wide environmental protection activities presupposed their being provided with the means for participation. The developed countries should therefore make available new and additional financial resources to developing countries in order to facilitate a common effort. His Government supported the recommendation in paragraph 22 of the Secretary-General's report (A/47/466) regarding the establishment of financial mechanisms for technology transfer. His Government also looked forward to indications of the commitment of the developed country Parties to implement Convention objectives regarding finance and technology transfer in advance of the entry into force of the Convention. India would contribute to the discussion in the Committee on various aspects of the interim phase of implementation of the Convention, including, inter alia, recommendations on participation, supplementary funding and secretariat support.

79. Mr. RYAN (United States of America) said that his Government was extremely pleased by the progress that had been made internationally on the issue of global climate change. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee must now prepare for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Items requiring attention at the meeting would include methodologies for

(Mr. Ryan, United States)

reporting net greenhouse gas emissions and for evaluating emissions abatement programmes and measures. Moreover, a suitable set of rules of procedure would be required for the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, together with coordination of activities in support of developing country participation in the Convention process. The General Assembly should continue to provide, within existing resource levels, financial and logistic support for the Committee secretariat; the Committee should continue to meet - as necessary and appropriate - to prepare for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Any amendments to its proposed plan of work should be discussed at the forthcoming meeting in Geneva.

80. He noted that despite the fact that many countries had signed the Convention, to date only four countries, including his own, had ratified it. He urged all countries to move swiftly to complete their domestic ratification procedures so that the important work of implementing the Convention could begin. He recommended that any climate change resolution adopted by the General Assembly should include a similar appeal. In regard to the question of drought and desertification, his Government considered combating desertification to be one of the more important questions before the General Assembly. The Rio Conference had laid out a new approach to the problem built around an international convention. His Government would participate actively and constructively in the initial deliberations on the subject.

81. Mr. SUGANO (Japan) said that while it was encouraging that so many countries had signed the Framework Convention, the latter's effectiveness would obviously depend upon the broad participation of both developed and developing countries. For its part, Japan had been making efforts to expedite the process of ratifying the Convention.

82. Since it was of great importance that the Convention should enter promptly into force, his Government welcomed the agreement on interim arrangements for the entry into force of the Convention, and looked forward to the upcoming session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Geneva; should the need exist, the General Assembly could consider authorizing the Committee to hold a subsequent session.

83. The role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change would continue to be of great importance. The decision to give the Panel the tasks of technical and scientific support was quite appropriate. His Government looked forward to the forthcoming second assessment report and also wished to continue to contribute to the Panel.

84. Measures taken to reduce greenhouse gases could only be effective over the long term if they were consistent with sustainable economic development. Strategies and measures to mitigate the greenhouse problem should be formulated with due attention to the conditions obtaining in each country. Japan had begun implementing a medium-term plan for greenhouse gas emissions without waiting for the entry into force of the Convention.

(Mr. Sugano, Japan)

85. Turning to the question of desertification, he said that it was a complex one encompassing a variety of meteorological, economic and demographic factors. As a result, efforts to tackle the problem should be organized in a coordinated way. His Government therefore supported the proposal at the Rio Conference to proceed with the negotiation of an international convention on the subject. In formulating programmes to address the problem of desertification, due attention should be given to the particular natural and socio-economic conditions of the countries or regions concerned. At the same time, international cooperation - particularly within the framework of the United Nations system - was also very important in supplementing and reinforcing efforts at lower levels.

86. Regarding the negotiating process for any convention on desertification he said that attention should be given to the role of other organizations inside and outside the United Nations system in sharing their accumulated expertise and experience in the desertification field. Such experience, and the results of projects previously undertaken, must be reviewed, and, to the extent possible, made available for consideration during the negotiating process. It was important to make use of existing bodies or organizations for secretariat support before any new bodies were created, unless there was a particular requirement for establishing an ad hoc secretariat. Over the years, UNEP - and specifically UNSO - had performed a central role in coordinating activities in this field, and so could provide adequate secretariat support to the negotiating committee. He recommended that the matter should be discussed in informal consultations.

87. Given the time constraints - namely, the need to finalize a draft convention on desertification by June 1994 - and experience with the negotiations on the Framework Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the negotiating committee should hold fewer than five meetings and the content of the convention should not be prejudged.

88. Mr. BORG (Malta) said that although the Framework Convention on Climate Change did not perhaps meet all the concerns expressed, it nevertheless laid down a solid base for mapping out response strategies and strengthening cooperation and understanding. Responsibility for implementing the Convention rested on Member States. Prompt entry into force of the Convention would facilitate action to stabilize emissions of atmospheric gases and open the way for further protocols. Malta was actively considering steps to ratify the Convention and urged other countries to do likewise. His delegation noted with satisfaction the decision of several developed countries to make available, in advance of the entry into force of the Convention, information regarding measures they had taken consistent with their commitments thereunder.

89. His delegation would support measures to allow the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to continue to function until the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to extend the mandate of its secretariat. The forthcoming sixth session of the Committee should give all signatory States

the first opportunity to organize together the future work to implement the provisions of the Framework Convention, which could receive a further important input from the meetings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to be convened in Zimbabwe the following week.

90. Another valid response to the ongoing efforts to consolidate the issue of climate change on the international agenda would be the convening, the following April, under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organization, of an intergovernmental meeting on the world climate programme to consider specific actions connected with the implementation of the relevant chapter of Agenda 21.

91. Malta had recently launched an international programme that would seek to identify and assess the possible consequences of climate change within the various ecosystems and their significant effects on the national economy and environment. Together with representatives of Mediterranean coastal areas, and with the assistance of the Climate Research Unit of the University of East Anglia and of UNEP's Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan, Malta had attempted to produce a Mediterranean basin scenario and to develop scenarios of future local climate for the selected study areas.

92. Careful monitoring and observation of climate conditions and identification of possible preventive policies was a continuing exercise which required international cooperation. Climate change could disrupt and endanger human life itself. Politicians, economists, environmentalists and scientists should work hand in hand to find meaningful and effective policies and measures that responded to climate change.

93. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) endorsed the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and expressed the hope that Benin would be among the first 50 States to ratify the Framework Convention on Climate Change. He reiterated his delegation's conviction that the Convention must be supplemented by at least two protocols.

94. As his delegation had already pointed out, the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee should be postponed until the beginning of 1993. Naturally the Committee would have to meet in 1993 and 1994 to carry out the plan of work in preparation for the first session of the Conference of the Parties. As noted in paragraph 19 of the report (A/47/466), the key to the Convention's success lay in the provision of adequate funds and technical resources to allow the developing countries to play their role in responding to climatic change; another essential need was for the provision of Training. He thanked all who had provided funds and expresed the hope that they would maintain their effort in order to replenish the special voluntary fund which should provide adequate support for participation in the sixth session of the Committee.

95. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on combating desertification and drought (A/47/393), he noted that the extreme drought

(Mr. Biaou, Benin)

currently affecting southern and western Africa aggravated the continent's critical economic situation and that the dryland environments of the Sudano-Sahelian region presented formidable problems to sustainable development. The total annual financing required to implement chapter 12 of Agenda 21 was some US$ 12.2 billion, about half of which would have to be provided through external financing. In that connection, his delegation endorsed the proposal made by Djibouti concerning the opening of a special desertification and drought window at the African Development Bank.

96. Chapter 12 of Agenda 21 should be implemented in full to complete the efforts made since the adoption of the 1977 Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The first step should be the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to elaborate an international convention on desertification, to be completed by June 1994. His delegation earnestly hoped that the draft resolution to be submitted by the Group of 77 on the topic would receive widespread support.

97. Mr. YERG (World Meteorological Organization) said that his organization remained committed to helping the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in its task of preparing for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Executive Council of WMO had given further guidance to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on how it could assist with the Framework Convention process and had recommended that special efforts be made to review WMO programmes to evaluate their possible contributions to the implementation of the Framework Convention. It had also recommended that a special Executive Council working group should meet to refine WMO policies in the light of the Framework Convention. The Working Group was due to meet later that month. The Executive Council had also requested the Secretary-General to explore opportunities for hosting the secretariat to the Framework Convention in Geneva.

98. The Executive Council of WMO had also taken an active stance regarding WMO's participation in implementing Agenda 21, with particular emphasis on the organization's contributions to the forthcoming negotiations on a convention on desertification. His organization was prepared to play a similar role in the negotiations for that convention as it had done in connection with the climate change Convention.

99. The World Meteorological Organization was planning, in conjunction with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, an intergovernmental meeting on the World Climate Programme, from 14 to 16 April 1993. Two of the meeting's most important goals would be to define the interlinkages between the many international and regional climate-related programmes and activities and to help determine priority areas for the future activities of the World Climate Programme based on Agenda 21 and the Framework Convention. His delegation hoped that the meeting would produce commitments by countries and organizations to strengthening and coordinating their climate-related activities as well as specific pledges of support for implementation of those activities, especially in the developing countries.

The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.